MARTIN, THE FOUNDLING;

507

OR,

Memoirs of a Valet de Chambre.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

EUGENE SUE,

AUTHOR OF "TEMPTATION; OR THE WATCH TOWER OF KOAT-VEN," "THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS," "THE WANDERING JEW," ETC.

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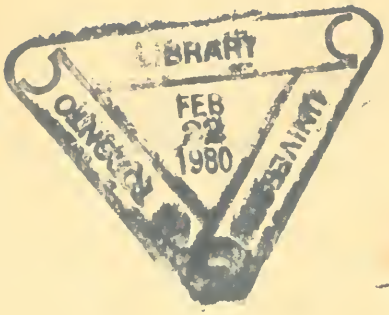
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MARTIN, THE FOUNDLING;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A VALET DE CHAMBRE.

BY

EUGENE SUE.

TO COUNT ALFRED D'ORSAY.

Accept this book, my dear Alfred, as a token of my old friendship and lively sympathy with you, the artist and friend of the great Byron, who devoted one of his immortal pages to do justice to your noble heart and elevated mind,—you, whose powerful and exact graver has sculptured on marble the large figure of Napoleon,—you, whose rare generosity has enriched our National Museum with one of the most wonderful productions of Indian art;—you, in fine, the generous founder of that charitable asylum in which every Frenchman visited by poverty, and remote from his own country, is sure to find at least bread to appease his hunger, and a shelter to cover his head.

Farewell, my dear Alfred, and believe in the sincerity of my affection.

EUGENE SUE.

Bordes, June 20, 1846.

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MARTIN, THE FOUNDLING.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOUBLE HUNT.

That part of the province of Sologne, where abut the confines of the two departments of the Loiret and the Loir-du-Cher, one portion of which constitutes what is called the basin of the Sauldre, offers to the traveller's view a very peculiar aspect: in general vast continuous woods of fir-trees, intersected here and there by broad commons overgrown with heath, or by marshy grounds, frequently inundated by the surrounding rivers and streamlets. Besides these you behold large sheets of water, edged around with tufted bunches of the iris and flowery rushes, still and sleeping waters, which are sometimes ruffled by the breeze as it kisses the surface; and here and there you likewise meet the lovely mead sloping down the vale, upon which grows the broad and knotty oak, to break the uniform aspect of this calm and quiescent landscape.

No pen, no pencil, could portray the melancholy repose of this desert country, with its boundless horizon formed by the external verdure of the forests of fir-trees; by those deep solitudes, where ever and anon are heard the sonorous echoes of the woodman's axe, and from which arises, when the wind blows, a rumour as prolonged, as imposing, as full of awe and majesty as the distant billow of

the sea; a sound which is caused by the quiver and the friction of the green foliage of the trees; nor is it a spectacle of ordinary grandeur to see the orb of day go slowly down behind those immense plains, smooth and polished as a lake, and covered over with rosy heath and reeds of golden hue which softly bend and undulate to the evening breeze.

The birds of prey, that flock to the desert wood for a retreat, such as the buzzard, the falcon, and the eagle, are as numerous on these wild solitudes as the common water-fowl.

That which, more especially in winter, lends a singular aspect to this region, is the perpetual dark and gloomy shade of these fir-trees mingled with copses of the birch-tree and the oak, in which ensconce themselves at all times the fox, the roebuck, and the wolf, and where the stag and even the wild-boar from the adjacent forests sometimes are seen to rove.

The consequence is, that this favoured country is looked upon as a land of promise by the huntsman, and likewise by the stealthy poacher, for the hare, the red partridge, and the pheasant abound in it, whilst the rabbit multiplies so fast that, from the rich landowner whose young woods he gnaws and mumbles, down to the poor tiller of the soil, whose lean patches of fields he browses in, all look upon him as a desolating plague.

Towards the end of the month of October, 1845, on a fine autumnal day, two groups of a dissimilar aspect, and coming from opposite directions, advanced towards each other through a large heathy common skirted towards the north by a ridge of trees extending as far as the eye could reach.

The first of these groups consisted of a huntsman on horseback and two keepers on foot, leading, in couples, a fine pack of thirty English fox-hounds; whose white and tawny coats were mostly streaked with black. The huntsman, walking his horse, guided the pack which followed him in the most perfect order, thanks to the regulating lash of the two keepers who brought up the rear.

The mounted huntsman was about sixty, his complexion was tanned, his eyes black and piercing, his hair white; he wore a leather sporting cape, a chestnut riding coat with a pale blue collar, fringed with silver at the collar and the pockets, riding boots and dark velveteen breeches. The keepers had on their hunting jackets partaking of the same livery; instead of boots they were long gaiters made of deer-skin, and their glittering brass bugle horns hung over their breasts.

The other group, which was coming towards the first, was composed of four mounted *gens-d'arme* headed by a quarter-master with blue and silver points.

The countenance of this subaltern officer, a man on the shady side of life, exhibited a strange incongruity of silliness and impudence. The three cornered square which surmounted his pointed brow, his lofty eye-brow, his peaked up nose, his bushy whiskers, shaped into a crescent, his chest swelling beneath his blue uniform crossed with a yellow buff-skin, his loins girt with the sash of his long sabre, his legs stiffly set in his strong boots, his right hand stuck against his thigh, Monsieur Beaucadet, the quarter-master of the country *gen-d'armerie*, paced leisurely on, throwing every now and then an imperious glance over his escort.

This countenance might have been called the official aspect of Monsieur Beaucadet; but, although a *gen-d'arme*, he was none the less an *agreeable man*, as he rejoiced in calling himself; for despite the ripeness of his age, he did not give up the thought of *pleasing*, and the noise of his amours, equally celebrated with his arraignments, resounded from Salbris to Romorantin; the civil and military functions of Monsieur Beaucadet, the steady and immovable instrument of the law, obliged him to observe a certain decorum, his close and austere profligacy gave him the manners of the village bailiff, or rather of a hypocritical voluptuary. Finally and in a word, throw but the commissary's gown over the uniform of an old soldier, and you have the perfect picture of Monsieur Beaucadet, the pompous and conceited magistrate.

The huntsmen and the *gen-d'arme*, arriving by two opposite roads, must unavoidably meet in a cross-way opened towards the plain, and edged with a very thick coppice on the side of the woods.

"Ah! here comes Monsieur Beaucadet," said the old bugleman to the keepers with a look of trepidation, and stopping his horse near a cross which rose up in the middle of the crossway; "and yet there is no help for it, we must bid the worthy *gen-d'arme* good day, for, d'ye see, my lads, the *gen-d'arme* always is one we must salute and doff our hats to, because on Sundays he pries into the wine-shops and taverns, and as he dares not drink himself, he has no mercy on those who do."

Monsieur Beaucadet soon came up with the huntsmen, stopped his horse near the old bugleman, and addressing the latter, he said to him in a harsh voice at once pompous and jocose:

"Well! old Latrace, so there you are tearing over the hills and valleys in pursuit of the wild beasts of the forest."

"You are very kind, Monsieur Beaucadet," answered the huntsman, raising his hand to the peak of his cap; "the beast we are looking for is more cunning than wild; it 's merely a fox, and I trust we shall start him from his hole before the Count, his son, and their party come up."

"This, then, is the spot where your hunting party are to meet together?"

"Yes, Monsieur Beaucadet; and for a man like you, who is said to be an admirer of the fair sex, there is some very pretty game among the party expected."

"I am a man, and as such *nobody is supposed to rebel against the law of love*," answered Monsieur Beaucadet, bridling up, and quite radiant at hearing himself deliver this judicial maxim which was for

ever in his mouth; "but what delicate game is this you speak of, old Latrace?"

"Some fair neighbours of the Count's: Mrs. Wilson and her daughter."

"What, the American ladies! the sister and niece of that fat, bulky man, shaped like a barrel, the new visitors to these parts. They say these are rare ones; but we shall see," said Monsieur Beaucadet adjusting his three-cornered hat on his head, and giving it a forty-five degree shape over his brains; "I must go and make my round among these fair Americans, to test them with a squint or two."

"And thus you forsake that poor little *Bruyare*," said the bugleman, with roguish gravity.

"Do n't talk of Bruyare," said Beaucadet, with a sneer. "Bruyare! the feeder of turkeys at the farm of *Grand-Genevre*, that little dwarf reaching up to my boots; who looks like a mad girl with her large, staring, wild eyes, and her coronets of leaves round her head; whom the nincompoops of Sologne have set down for a witch or something of that sort. Come, come, old boy, do you think me as tame as her flock of turkeys, that you try to pass such a jest on me?"

"Nay, nay, Monsieur Beaucadet," returned the old huntsman, with ironical composure, "you are a keen knowing file among the wenches; and I have heard you say a hundred times that there was not, in spite of her size, a prettier girl than Bruyare within ten leagues round about."

"I must have been making game of you, old Cupid."

"Nay, they do say in the country, that you have been sometimes seen running over the moor, with your big boots, holding your horse by the bridle, to help the little rogue to gather her turkeys?"

"I!"

"Yes, Monsieur Beaucadet, and they even pretend that one day as you were romping with the little puss, in spite of her struggles, her two large turkey cocks, which they believe she has bewitched and which were so fierce that they fought like two dogs in her defence, leapt up to your face; and even pecked at your nose, though you strove to ward them off with your sword scabbard whilst the little hussy ran away laughing with all her might.

Monsieur Beaucadet puckered up his brow, turned up his flat nose, and resumed in his judicial voice, at the same time striving to smile ironically:

"Absurd and ridiculous! what I, the representative of the law in flesh and bone, I to battle with turkey cocks and be worsted by them for toying a little with their imp of a feeder! Come, you have bearded the dignity of office quite enough, Master Joker; let's change the subject. So the Count is returned then, is he? Does he intend to stay long?"

"Faith, I can't tell; the Count is not talkative, and when he has said, do so and so, he adds but little else; he is so stiff and harsh."

"He! the Count! I should think so," cried Monsieur Beaucadet with a strong look of approbation. "There's a model of a landlord for yo ! a man who cares as much for *ifs* and *buts*, for *O dears!* and *God help me's!* as would a cannon-ball; always holding by the law, by his right and title; there's a master, who twenty times has done me the kindness to deliver to my custody the sickly Solignots for picking up dry wood in his forests. Worthy man! not on account of his respect for dry wood! but for his respect for principle. I esteem that landlord all fierce as he is," added Monsieur Beaucadet, by way of ejaculatory evocation. "When he likes too, what a face he can make! There are many King's attorneys and police officers who would give a great deal for such a face, if it were only to terrify your malefactors. Come, confess now, old Latrace, that by the side of his father, the young Viscount looks like a silly woman."

"The truth is that his lordship the Count, is not what you may call *tender-hearted;* but he is just, and if he overlooks nothing, he never scolds without reason. Moreover, they assert that he formerly was very kind, and that no man, at that time, could be more engaging."

"The Count...very kind...you are sporting with my credulity, old Latrace."

"So kind, as to be even weak."

"The Count ..weak...you trifle with my modesty, father Latrace."

"But all at once the sheep turned to a wolf."

"He must have been too closely shorn?"

"That may be; however, he likes hunting most passionately, and for my part, I ask for no virtue but this," said Latrace, smiling.

"Then every huntsman must be severe with your poachers, a maleficent species of vermin: such for instance as that beggarly *Bête-Puante;* let him give himself what airs he will, sooner or later, I shall pounce upon him, as sure as my name is Beaucadet."

And you will do well," said the old bugleman though his face betrayed some uneasiness as he spoke, "you will do well; the Count will be obliged to you, for he loves his sport like a madman."

"I believe you! For he came home but yesterday, and to-day he is out with the hounds."

"Listen to me, Monsieur Beaucadet. It is now near eight months since either he or his son have cocked a gun or heard the sound of a bugle, for they left this in March at the end of the sporting season—you are not the man, Monsieur Beaucadet, to forget to prosecute if they were to attempt to hunt after the 12th of March?"

"I take a pride in being strict—respect the law, whose image I am! The 12th of March closes the hunting season, every body must know it, for every man is supposed to know the laws," says the legislator, "an old rake," added Monsieur Beaucadet, by way of parenthesis, "that's what I repeat every day to these Solognot peasants when they say to me in a whining voice: 'But, Monsieur Beaucadet, I did not know it was forbidden to do so and so. *I*

can't know the law sir, for nobody ever read it to me, and I can't read it myself.' "

"Egad, when a man can't read?" said the old bugleman shaking his head, "and when the law has never been read to him, how the devil can he know it?"

One of the *gens-d'arme* in the escort, an old soldier with a coarse open countenance, adorned with a scar, with chevrons to his cuffs and a red ribbon in his button hole, had several times, during the conversation of his superior and the huntsman, shrugged up his shoulders impatiently. At length, availing himself of the privilege granted to his length of service, he said to the officer somewhat drily;

"Well, during all this palaver time is running on, and we shall be too late to start the game."

"Silence in the ranks!" said Monsieur Beaucadet haughtily looking sideways at the speaker.

"It was hardly worth while telling us to load our carbines and pistols!" muttered the old soldier between his teeth.

"To start the game? loaded carbines and pistols? what does this mean," said the old bugleman surprised. "Oh! I see it now; you are in pursuit of some trespasser, a poacher perhaps—Bête-Puante, I dare say."

And once more, the face of the old huntsman showed signs of a slight uneasiness.

"A trespasser? a poacher?" said the officer disdainfully. "Come now! The game I am going to track is to a trespasser or a poacher, what a wild boar or a wolf is to the fox, you are going to hunt, old Latrace," answered Monsieur Beaucadet, "but I am in no hurry to begin my track, and for good reasons."

Before we proceed with this narrative, let us remind the reader that the spot on which this scene was enacting, abutted almost on the border of a copse of oaks, very thick at this place, and above which arose a forest of huge fir-trees.

"Is it any great criminal you are looking for?" said the bugleman.

Instead of replying, Monsieur Beaucadet struck with a sudden thought, said to the huntsman:

"In what part of the wood are you going to hunt?"

"Our fox has stolen into the second enclosure of the old coppice wood of *Aubepin*."

"Is not that the place where there are such huge rocks, and where the wood is so thick?" asked the officer with eagerness.

"Yes, Monsieur Beaucadet, a true hiding place for a wild-boar—so thick a fence, that my hounds will have some trouble in getting through."

After pausing a moment to reflect, the officer, cried out:

My escaped prisoner must be there if any where. This morning at day-break, a woodman saw plunge into a copse, a fellow covered with rags, whose description tallies with that of my villain; and as my villain dares not leave the wood during the day, I am as certain of pouncing upon him as you are to hunt down your fox, old Latrace."

"But if so be, Monsieur Beaucadet, what prevents your beginning the search?"

"I am waiting for one of my men, who is to come and tell me when they have begun to beat the bushes; for then my villain will be hemmed in on three sides—and they will drive him out on the skirt of this wood, which I and my *gens-d'arme* are going to watch."

"But since when has there been a robber in these parts?"

"Have you not been to Salbris, this day or two?"

"No."

"Then you have not yet read the description of the wretch, posted up at the Mayor's gate."

"No," Monsieur Beaucadet.

"I will read it to you. If you happen to meet with him, you can fall upon him, with the help of your keepers. Attend to me, old Latrace: and you too, my lads," added Monsieur Beaucadet, addressing the keepers who drew closer.

The officer, drawing a paper from one of his holsters, read as follows:

"Description of the accused Bamboche."

"That's a queer name, any how," said Latrace.

"We know of none fitter belonging to him; and justice is obliged to degrade herself so far as to use that name," said Monsieur Beaucadet, who continued:

"This prisoner, whose real name and former course of life are unknown, contrived in the night of the 12th of October to escape from the prison at Bourges, where he was locked up on a twofold charge of murder; there is every reason to believe that after having found refuge in the forest of Romorantin, where he was on the point of being taken, he has gained the woods and desert moors, which lie adjacent to and between Vierzon, Salbris, and Laferté-Saint-Auben.

"The accused is a man of athletic strength and of extraordinary daring; he is about thirty. In height he is five feet eleven; his hair is almost grey in spite of his youth; his eyebrows and beard are dark,—his forehead broad, open, and rather bald,—his eyes round and grey,—his nose aquiline,—his mouth rather small,—his chin square,—his face long—his cheek bones very high and prominent,—his colour ruddy.

"Private marks:

"The accused likewise has on his left breast a blue and red tatooing representing two hearts pierced with an arrow, and crowned with a skull: over the two hearts, two cross daggers, tied together with a ribbon on which you may read these words in red letters:

"'BASQUINE FOR LIFE,
"HER LOVE OR DEATH,
"15*th February*, 1826.'"

"Basquine? what a very funny name," said the bugleman.

"A very fit name to be marked on the breast of a

malefactor named Bamboche," said the *gen-d'arme*: Basquine! what a name."

"Besides, I say," resumed the huntsman, "if he has plighted everlasting love to Mademoiselle Basquine in 1826, Monsieur Bamboche must have been a lover betimes: for if he is now thirty, he must have sworn this *love for life* between the ages of ten and twelve."

"The scoundrel is precocious in love, as sure as your precocious lovers are scoundrels," said Monsieur Beaucadet, sententiously; after which he went on reading the list of private marks, detailed in the description of the fugitive.

"On his right breast there is another tatooing, likewise red and black, representing two hands tightly clasped, and above them are these words:

'BROTHERLY FRIENDSHIP FOR LIFE TO MARTIN.
10*th December*, 1825.'"

"Zounds! Monsieur Bamboche was still more precocious in friendship than in love," said Latrace.

"It must have been a bandit of his own stamp who was his foster-brother at some old robber's. He must have brought them up to crime since they were weaned; and the young rascals have thriven amazingly!" resumed the officer, and then returned to his description:

"Beneath these words you perceive a singular mark which might well be compared to a baker's *tally*; on this mark forming a double blue line, are impressed five small red irregular notches, which fill up about one fourth of the length of the mark. Rather below the fifth rib, on the right of the chest you may perceive upon the accused a scar proceeding from a gun shot wound, whilst the right arm is, in two places, deeply furrowed by two scars resulting from wounds occasioned by a sharp instrument. The last time the escaped prisoner was caught sight of in the forest of Romorantin, he was clad in a blue tattered frock, an old pair of woollen trowsers, similar to those worn by our foot soldiers; one of his feet was bare, the other wrapped over with rags; he carried in one hand a bundle contained in a spotted handkerchief, and in the other a huge knotty stick to walk with."

After reading this description, Monsieur Beaucadet put it back in the holsters of his pistols, and said to the huntsman, who seemed to be rather absent for the last few seconds:

"I hope my robber is easy to distinguish; you can hardly now mistake your game for mine, old Latrace; but what the devil are you thinking about?"

"I think," said the old huntsman slowly, and with a most ingenuous astonishment, "that it is really a singular chance."

"What chance?"

"That your robber should have his breast tattooed *brotherly friendship for Martin.*"

"What is there in that to surprise you old Latrace?"

"Why, only this, that the new valet de chambre whom the Count has brought here, is called Martin."

"The deuce he is," exclaimed Beaucadet rising in his stirrups.

After a moment's pause, the *gen-d'arme*, addressing the bugleman:

"So then, the new valet de Chambre of Count Duriveau is called Martin?"

"He is."

"How long has he been in the Count's service?"

"Only since a very short time, I believe."

"Have you seen him?"

"Last night; it was he came to give me my orders."

"What sort of man is he? tall? short? fat or thin?"

"He is a tall fine young fellow."

"How old?"

"He may be tending towards thirty, at the outside."

"His eyes? his nose? his forehead? his mouth? his chin?" asked the officer precipitating his questions.

"Faith, Monsieur Beaucadet, I don't know; I did not scan him so closely as to be able to describe him from top to toe. Yesterday it was dark when he came down to the kennel yard, and I saw him only by the light of my lanthorn."

"You say he has not been long in your master's service?"

"No, certainly not; for I said this very morning to the head groom, when I went to the stable for my horse: 'So the Count has got a new *valet-de-chambre?*' 'Quite a new one,' answered the head groom."

"I shall be enabled to render a very nice service to justice," said Monsieur Beaucadet, reflecting; "nothing is known of this robber's former course of life; I will make this MARTIN speak out by hook or by crook. MARTIN, whose name is written with friendship on his rascally breast, and——"

"Stop a bit, Monsieur Beaucadet," said the bugleman, interrupting the officer, "remember the famous proverb: 'There are more asses than one at the fair that are called—MARTIN;' now, why not apply the same saying to *valets-de-chambre?* And then——"

"Well, what then?"

Remember, that my master, the Count, who is so severe, and scrupulous, with the people in his household, never engages any one till he has made the strictest inquiries."

"Well, old Latrace, what of that?"

"Do you think that an honest man as this Monsieur Martin must be, since he is enrolled in the

retinue of his lordship, can be, or can ever have been the friend of the robber you are in pursuit of?"

"The game has been started!" cried Monsieur Beaucadet, now interrupting the huntsman; "here is Ramageau!"

"A bloodhound, you mean?" said Latrace.

"Yes, a bloodhound booted and on horseback," answered Beaucadet, pointing to a *gen-d'arme* at a distance, who was riding towards them at full gallop.

"Well! good sport to you, Monsieur Beaucadet," said the huntsman.

"Remember, I rely upon you: between huntsmen we should help each other. Lend me your helping hand in case of need, if you fall in with my robber, you know."

"Agreed, Monsieur Beaucadet, and if my fox should happen to pass your way, as you stand in the skirts of the wood, holloo as loud as you can to drive him up into the common."

"Never fear, I foresee that I shall have prime sport, and perhaps even double luck, by pouncing at the same time on that rascally poacher, Bête-Puante, who has given me leg bail hitherto."

On hearing once again the threat pointed at the poacher, the bugleman could not suppress a slight start; but the officer was too busy observing the *gen-d'arme* advancing at full gallop, to notice this impression.

After a short silence the bugleman resumed:

"In the chase, d'ye see, Monsieur Beaucadet, you must never follow any thing but the beast before the hounds—otherwise you *stutter* as the saying is, among us men of venery. To-day rest satisfied with hunting the wolf, to-morrow you shall hunt after the wild cat."

"Come, come, old Latrace; for shrewd old file as you are, you forget that in a *battue* a marksman aims at whatever comes within reach of his gun,—whether a rabbit or a stag. So, if Bête-Puante darts by, he shall have a taste of my hand-cuffs. I know the rascal is protected in the country by those Solognots who help him to skulk, and never give him up, because they say he has cures for their fevers, the hungry looking fools! But Bête-Puante has spread his wings long enough, it is high time to put him in a cage."

At that moment the cry of a bird, a sharp, sonorous, lingering cry was heard to issue from the copse at the edge of the wood.

The old huntsman became as red as purple and shuddered.

The officer, surprised by this sudden cry, sprang up in his saddle, and raised his eyes inquiringly towards the green tufted tops of fir-trees. This motion of his prevented him from noticing the bugleman's alarm as well as a slight rustle in the foliage towards the thickest part of the copse lining the cross-way; and yet there was not the least breath of wind at the time to account for it.

"What an ugly cry for a bird's," said Monsieur Beaucadet.

"Don't you recognise the cry of the Sologne eagle?" said Latrace carelessly. "Look, there he goes yonder to return to his old haunt, skimming over the oak trees. See how he sails along."

"Where, where? old Latrace," said the officer.

"Yonder, do n't you see: there on the left hand by that twisted fir tree? there, he rises again—look—look."

"I see nothing at all; my eyes are not a huntsman's, like yours. If it were my robber now, or that rascally poacher, *Bête-Puante*, I should distinguish him half a mile off. But here comes Ramageau, and now we shall hear tidings of the *battue*.

And truly, indeed, the *gen-d'arme* whom they had perceived on the plain for some time before, came up and stopped short before the group. The soldier's horse was smoking from every pore and the white foam fell about him.

"Well, Ramageau, what news?" said the officer.

"Monsieur Beaucadet, they have begun the *battûe*. The peasants who are required to track the robber have surrounded the wood of Anbepin on every side, and they are coming down upon this place."

"*Gens-d'arme!*" exclaimed Monsieur Beaucadet in the tone of a general haranguing his soldiers before joining battle; "*gens-d'arme!* the action is about to begin; I rely upon you! Cock your pistols, draw your swords,—be ready!"

And, thereupon, Monsieur Beaucadet, expanding in his unform, waved his hand with a sign of patronage to the bugleman whom he was leaving in the crossway, and rode off at the head of his small escort of five men, whom he posted as scouts on the edge of the forest.

During these military stategical manœuvres of Monsieur Beaucadet, they descried from afar an open carriage, in which were seated two ladies, attended by several gentlemen on horseback clad in their gay red hunting coats, and followed by a number of servants holding several led horses covered with cloth.

"Now, now, my lads," said the old bugleman; "gather up the pack; take care none of the dogs go astray; for here comes the Count and his party."

And so saying, Latrace got down from his horse whom he gave up to one of the keepers, having thus set foot to the ground in order to receive with all due respect his master, Count Duriveau.

CHAPTER II.

THE COPSE.

THE hunt has already lasted a long time, the sun, tending rapidly towards his decline, throws his warm reflection over the sky; the tufts of oaks, and the large trunks of the fir-trees seem to stand out from a back-ground of red and yellow hue; in the midst of a thick clump of trees, become impenetrable through the luxuriant growth of the furze, the brambles, the fern, and the sweet-briar,—in a word, in the thickest of the wood, in which they were following the chase, stood a small glade scattered over here and there with lumps of grey and mossy stone, almost entirely concealed beneath an inextricable entanglement of ivy, rope-weed, and wild honeysuckle.

The deep stillness of this solitude was broken at remote intervals, by the hollow rustling of the leafy firs yielding to the wild breeze, or by the far-distant echoes of the bugle-horn.

All at once a crackling noise is heard in the copse surrounding the glade; the branches of the young oaks, with their golden leaves, bend and open asunder; a man issues from his hiding-place; he stoops, nay almost crawls as he goes along.

This man, whose description the reader is acquainted with, is the fugitive Bamboche, escaped from the prison of Bourges, and charged with two murders. His wretched blue frock, his only garb, rent to tatters by the brambles, exposes in several parts his naked and hairy breast, and his muscular arms; his cloth pantaloons, soiled with mud, torn to ribbons, are slit open to the knee; his hands and feet are defaced with scratches and bleeding; he is out of breath; and the sweat streams from his face.

For a moment he stops short, listening to the faintest sound; he leans against a tree to recover his breath, snatches a handful of leaves, and lifts them greedily to his parching lips, and chews them to relieve his thirst. The eyes of this man shine with a wild glare, his iron-grey hair, stiffly set upon his bald forehead, contrasting with his dark beard and the youthfulness of his bold and resolute face, impart a strange expression to his countenance. Turning pale through hunger and intense anguish of mind, his aspect at once expresses both grief and alarm.

Suddenly a deep-toned voice, rising in a manner from beneath the very feet of the wanderer, exclaims:—

"Bamboche!"

At the sound of this name the man leaps up with amazement, looks about him with affright, uncertain whether to fly or stay. Then rapidly crouch-

ing, he picks up two large stones which, in the hands of one so ferocious, may prove terrible missiles indeed.

All had again returned to a deep and gloomy silence.

Bamboche looked around him with increasing anxiety. Suddenly at a distance of three steps, and as if emerging from the ground, a man, clad in a strange garb, stood up before him.

This man, of the middle stature, wore a capacious surtout and wolf's skin trousers; his waterproof cap was wrought out of the fine and close skin of the roebuck, and set off with a slip of badger; tanned and swarthy by the inclemency of the seasons, his features were still almost entirely buried beneath a wild, grey beard; his brown eyes, sharp and restless, seemed to be inwardly lighted up with a phosphorescent and expanding pupil, as if his habit of sleeping by day and wandering by night had lent him that *vision in the dark* which belongs to most beasts of prey; nevertheless the face of this man was far from mean or repulsive. On his hardy and intelligent countenance, often contracted by a smile of bitter irony, you descried that stamp of indefinable greatness which is always expressed on the forehead of the outlaw, and proceeds from his habit of living in danger, solitude, and open rebellion against the laws.

You have probably recognised already Bête-Puante, the poacher; hidden in the copse near the crossway of the Cross, he had been a secret participator in the colloquy between the bugleman and Beaucadet.

Up to the moment of his sudden apparition to Bamboche, the poacher had squatted down and concealed himself in a state and posture which, according to the poacher's vocabulary, is to be *upon the catch*, and in a kind of hole five or six feet deep, covered over with tufts of fern and furze forming a roof or cupola, through which the cunning poacher, whilst he lingers safe and unseen for hours, watching his prey, is able to perceive it at length, and to shoot it close at hand.

At the sight of Bête-Puante, Bamboche, with all his boldness, drew back, overcome with stupor; the stones he had picked up fell from his hands· whether it was that the sight of the short double-barrelled carbine with which the poacher was armed made him sensible that the struggle would be too unequal; or on the other hand that some instinctive presentiment assured him that there must exist some tie of sympathy between his condition as an escaped prisoner and the adventurous life of the man of the woods.

Still, he drew back again, and continued to cast at the poacher a wild look of anxiety.

"Your name is Bamboche, you have escaped from the prison of Bourges—tracked like a wild beast, you would not be able to escape—I am come to your help—in the name of Martin."

At this name of Martin, the wild physiognomy of Bomboche changed at once; a quick and touching emotion unlocked his hard and contracted features; a tear overspread the fierce ardour of his glance: with hands clasped, with parted lips, with a beating heart, and heaving chest, he could just exclaim in a voice stifled with tenderness——

"Martin!!"

But on seeing distrust return to the features of the wanderer after this explosion of feeling and affection, the poacher hastened to add:—

"Yes, Martin—BASQUINE—the LAVRASSE—the——

Bamboche interrupted the poacher as if the whimsical names uttered by the latter had sufficiently proved the identity of Martin, and brightened as he exclaimed:

"'Tis he—his very self."

Thus the wanderer forgot the ruthless pursuit which he had only just escaped by a miracle, and which he might be the victim of in a few moments. None of the impressions of Bamboche escaped the keen and piercing eye of Bête-Puante. Suddenly bending his hand like an ear-trumpet, he applied it to his head, and notwithstanding that the deepest silence still reigned around, he said in a whisper, after listening for a moment:—

"They come, you are lost."

"Do you know Martin? then he is returned from abroad," said the wanderer, still forgetting his own danger.

This forgetfulness of self, at so desperate a moment, affected the poacher, who resumed:

"Martin is here; he owes you much: I know it well; 'tis in his name I come to save you, whether innocent or guilty."

The wanderer shuddered.

"But by the brotherly friendship which you vowed to Martin, promise me that, if he orders you, you will give yourself up to justice."

"Let Martin but say to me, 'Give yourself up,' and I will surrender."

"I know I may trust to you; so follow me—you are safe."

Then plunging a few steps into a thick copse, on the left of the ambush where he had been concealed, the poacher uncovered the narrow mouth of a sort of den. The moveable trap which closed it consisted of large faggots of fir, overlaid with mossy stones, cemented with earth where bunches of bramble had long since taken root.

The wanderer was about to let himself down into this unexpected asylum, when the poacher said to him in a voice of solemn grief: "Respect and pity—for what you are about to discover,—otherwise you would be a profane spirit, unworthy of compassion."

And then as the wanderer fixed upon the poacher a look of anxiety and surprise, the echo of the horns, hitherto heard only confusedly, came near. Then Bête-Puante, pushing Bamboche forward by the shoulder, whispered to him, after once more listening attentively:

"I hear the horses gallop—quick!—quick!—hide yourself!"

Then, struck with a sudden thought, whilst Bamboche was disappearing through the narrow opening, the poacher, leaving the mouth open, rushed at a bound out of the copse, threw himself flat upon his belly in the middle of the glade, rivetted his ear to the earth, and was thus enabled to distinguish more audibly than in the wood the most distant sounds.

Soon after he rose up again, exclaiming in a voice of desperation:

"Curses on him! the fox is leading the chase in this direction."

Doubly alarmed, the poacher ran back to the copse to close the mouth of the cavern. But he met the wanderer coming out, his face livid and disordered, crying out in a quivering voice:

"I would rather be taken—killed!—than to remain in that subterranean. Oh! what have I there seen—if you knew by what fatality!—that name—Bruyère!—I shall go mad!"

Suddenly the cries and barkings of the hounds, hitherto remote, drew nearer, and began to resound in fearful unison among those large, silent, and sounding woods. At the same moment a gust of wind bore over to them a confused sound of shouts and cries advancing in several directions at once. These were the cries of the men tracking the wanderer.

These two incidents had transpired in less time than it takes to write them in; and at the moment when Bamboche, rushing from the poacher's den, had uttered the above broken sentences.

"You are a dead man!" cried the poacher, with a frightful look, raising his carbine, which he held in both hands like a club. "I will kill you—if they

find you here—before I have had time to close my hiding-place."

The poacher had hardly uttered this threat, before the branches of the thick clump of trees round about the glade were violently shaken, as if they were being opened to a precipitate approach. The wanderer shuddered;—and whether he obeyed the injunction of the poacher, or that the instinct of self-preservation was stronger than his fright, he sprang into the cavern. Bête Puante replaced the heavy trap-door, brushed off the foot-prints of Bamboche, and had just time enough to throw himself to the bottom of his ambush, where he had before squatted down.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOUNDS AT FAULT.

THE poacher had just retired to his watch-hole; when suddenly the cracking of the branches was succeeded by the noise of a light gallop, and a large fox, with a red fallow coat, with black paws and ears, sprang hastily into the glade; he was dripping with water, having recently crossed through a pond, in order to foil the scent of the hounds; his scheme had succeeded; for after lingering a moment in this part of the wood, the pack had withdrawn from it again, as was evident by the retreating echo of their cries.

The fox was panting—out of breath; his tongue, red and thoroughly parched, trailed out of his mouth; his greenish eyes glistened, whilst his dropping ears, his long drawn tail, his throbbing sides, bore witness to the fleetness of his flight, and the exhaustion of his strength. He stopped awhile, smelt for the wind by turning his black muzzle to and fro; then, for several minutes he seemed to be listening towards the western point with equal attention and anxiety—he could gather no sound.

The poacher's watch-hole being some steps off, and leeward of the fox, he could not perceive the proximity; the cries of the pack, now completely astray, had ceased. Thus having gained some minutes on the hounds in hot pursuit of him, the hunted beast took breath again, sunk on itself, stretching out his paws, his head laying flat upon the ground, his mouth open; he would have been taken for dead without the constant, almost convulsive, quiver of the ear, always ready to collect the slightest sound.

All at once the fox starts upon his fore-paws, as if pulled by a spring; he holds in his panting breath, whose audible throbs hinder the nice perception of his hearing—he listens.

The chase, in its capricious windings and manœuvres, in its sudden and quick returns, was again drawing towards the glade; this time, the flourish of the horns was heard to accompany the howlings of the pack.

In this fearful extremity, feeling himself driven to his last shifts, the jaded animal tries a last effort, a last trick, to baffle the pack once more and escape them. He crosses the glade, in every sense doubling and twisting the track of his steps into a net so inextricable that it would be impossible for the dogs to make it out. Then, gathering himself up, with one enormous bound, he sprang from the glade into the copse, fell among the rocks, almost over the trap-door covered with stones and brambles, which veiled the entrance to the cavern; then, hardly setting his paws in the moss of the rocks, with a second desperate leap, of at least six feet width, he reaches the thickest of the copse, followed up these with four other extraordinary bounds, and finally began to fly with all the speed of his limbs, stiffened by weariness, and by their recent cold immersion.

Thanks to a marvellous instinct of self-preservation, natural to all hunted animals, the fox, by his enormous and repeated bounds, had broken, within a radius of from thirty to forty steps, the *scent*, a warm and sour smell which his feet leave behind him with their prints, strong emanations, and penetrating fumes, which, seizing on the keen smelling of the dogs, unerringly direct their pursuit.

And now the fox has made off, the poacher issues abruptly from his watch-hole, and springs into the glade, crouches down to the ground, scans it with a jealous eye, discovers the new fresh prints of the fox's paws, and quickly brushes off the marks with his feet — thus destroying, by the trample on the soil, not only the foot-marks, but the smell produced by the animal's passage, the better to keep off the hounds, and consequently the huntsmen from their sport, so close to his den.

The howlings of the pack, the clarion of the bugle, coming nearer and nearer, the noise becomes louder every moment; from time to time are heard to mingle with it the cries and signal calls of the scouts on the track who, from three different points, are advancing to the search of Bamboche the wanderer.

More and more terrified by this alarming contiguity, the poacher plunges into the copse through which the fox entered the glade, and there too discovers the tracks of the animal. Next, as he had done before, he brushes off these marks with his foot for about two hundred steps, till he meets with an enormous trunk of a tree thrown down across the way, and which the fox had doubtless climbed over.

After which, feeling assured that this immense destruction of track in the warm and odorous passage of the fox, which alone could guide the pack in their pursuit, must now render the chase hopeless, and remove them from his den, the poacher sprang back into the thickest of the wood.

The anticipations of Bête-Puante at first were not deceived.

He had been gone some time; the pack was in full cry; all at once those barkings and howlings so resonant and vibrating, stopped short like magic: the hounds had lost the scent; that is to say that having sprang over the enormous trunk of a tree beyond which the poacher himself had destroyed the prints and the smell of the fox's course, the pack no longer finding the signs to direct them—the pack which never bark save when they are in full scent of the game, suddenly became silent.

Walking up and down, uneasy, disconcerted by this sudden fissure in that *scent* until then so strong and palpable, the dogs, baffled and amazed, sought, and sought in vain on all sides, with their snouts to the earth,—being, as they say, *taken at a fault* at two hundred steps from the poacher's den.

The old bugleman, informed of this incident by the abrupt silence of the hounds, hastened up to their assistance; but he stopped suddenly short at sight of the huge tree which separated him from his hounds, and the trunk of which with its spreading branches formed a most perilous obstacle to overleap; master Latrace, therefore, in spite of his own courage and the vigour of his steed, was far too experienced a huntsman to hazard, by needless prowess, a fall which might prove mortal either to him or to his steed; so seeing no passage open on either side of the trunk locked up as it was by the dense cluster of trees, he made a long circuit to overtake the hounds.

Suddenly two women in riding habits, one close behind the other, and coming through the wood, arrived at the overturned tree before which the old huntsman had so prudently recoiled,—and almost at the same instant they were joined by two horsemen, who at the sight of the formidable check, exclaimed both at once in a voice of terror:

"Madam, stop your horse!"

"Mademoiselle, take care."

But in spite of these judicious warnings and entreaties, the first of the two fair riders, not being able to subdue the mettle of her steed, or taking pleasure in the bold and hazardous experiment, gave the beast a smart lash with her whip, and made him vault over the bar with as much audacity as grace; but the violence of the leap, together with the action of the wind slightly raising the long petticoat of the intrepid Amazon, discovered the shapely contour of a handsome leg, enclosed in a white silk stocking, and firmly pressing on the stirrup a most charming foot, the black buskin encasing which was armed with a small silver spur.

The two horsemen, stupefied at a temerity so unusual, could not help uttering a slight cry of alarm: and both at once addressing themselves to the second *huntress*, who seemed inclined to follow her companion, exclaimed:

"Mademoiselle, for heaven's sake! stop——"

"I must go and join my mother," answered the young lady in a soft voice, pointing to the other lady.

The senior lady, with her horse standing beyond the fearful trunk, had turned towards the spectators of this feat a smiling countenance slightly flushed by the feeling of pride at the danger surmounted; but, on seeing her child preparing to emulate her, her colour instantly fled from her cheek, and she cried out:

"Raphaela, I entreat you——"

It was too late: the young lady, as full of sport as her mother, was clearing the trunk of the tree, and at the same time, by an impulse of graceful modesty, she retained with the point of her whip, which she carried in her left hand, the long fold of her dress, to prevent its rising by ill chance, as had happened in her mother's case.

CHAPTER IV.

A YOUNG FATHER.

THE two horsemen who had overtaken Mrs. Wilson and her daughter (for that was the name of the two huntresses) were Count Duriveau and his son. Count Duriveau, the master of the pack, was the son of an innkeeper at Clermont-Ferrand; the said innkeeper,—a man of raging cupidity, became the owner of a vast fortune, begun with usury, subsequently swollen by the purchase of national estates, and finally completed by his partaking in the supplies to the French armies under the *Directoire*,—had doubled and quadrupled his means by every species of crafty profits, legal malversation, and the most sordid avarice.

On the death of his father, Adolphus Duriveau—not then a count by any means—found himself in possession of three hundred thousand livres a year landed property. Emerging from the condition of servitude, of penury, in which his father had kept him with unexampled harshness, and meeting with an honourable tutor, Adolphus Duriveau, in spite of his detestable education, at first inclined to good, and felt some impulses towards generous ideas; his heart, dilated by the happiness of a splendid career, gave access to all those pleasures from which he had at first been cut off: he appeared kind and liberal, and yielded so far to the impulses of his heart, and to the kind of intoxication which is often caused by the exuberance of joy so sudden and unknown.

The first acts of his generosity were frequently repaid by ingratitude: ingratitude—that crucible in which are really tried the most constant and generous hearts; this man did not withstand that severe test: he began by complacency, then he grew sullen, next he grew angry, and at length obdurate; his heart finally turning to stone. Like so many others, attesting the little good he had done, Monsieur Duriveau quoted human ingratitude as a principle, and hardness of heart as a duty to screen one's-self from its injustice. Too easily undeceived as to charity, because his recent and undistinguishing generosity was wanting in patience, disinterestedness, discernment, and resignation, and still more in the becoming grace of *concealment*, Monsieur Duriveau never suspected that he had himself failed to understand the evils he thought he was relieving, and which he sometimes aggravated, by his abrupt and impatient harshness, and that to appease certain timid and jealous misfortunes requires a touch infinitely soft and tender.

This praiseworthy but unsuccessful attempt to cultivate generous ideas necessarily produced a fatal reaction in the mind of Adolphus Duriveau: with him systematic indifference became, *experience of mankind*,—pity, *meekness*; selfishness, *good sense*;—cupidity, *foresight*;—deep disdain of other people, *consciousness of one's own worth*;—the misfortunes of others, *the punishment of irregularity; the inherent consequence of our social condition, the will of Providence, &c.*

Monsieur Duriveau, in a word, was a rigid Catholic as respects this impious fallacy: THAT AN INDULGENT GOD CREATED MAN TO SUFFER.

This noble axiom justified the hard disposition of this selfish casuist.

He used it as an argument, and triumphed in so doing.

"Man is made for misery," he would say, with insulting bitterness; "God has willed it so; let his will be respected! we must never thwart his ordainment! let us live ourselves in splendour, nay, as a happy exception—it only confirms the rule."

So this man, according to his view of things, might reason in this manner:—

"I was good, generous, humane; I have met with nothing but deception, ingratitude; every misfortune deserves its ill-fate; how stupid it is to feel pity."

It must be owned Monsieur Duriveau, endowed with a remarkable native good sense, with great energy of will, with rare audacity, was thus enabled, by dint of reasoning like a cynic, to lend a *piquant* aspect to these cruel paradoxes, and in the circles he frequented, he often met with approvers, might we not say *accomplices?*

Frequenting a certain society, outrageously proud of their wealth or recent titles, the leprosy of idleness, the almost inevitable influence of an immense fortune acquired without industry, soon stifled the first tendencies of Monsieur Duriveau. He remained ostentatious, and became greedy; then to be rich was no longer sufficient—he must be *noble* too, like many more. His marriage with the daughter of a duke, made so by Napoleon, and since faithful to the restored Bourbons, gained him the title of Count; and Adolphus Duriveau, the son of old Duriveau, the usurer and innkeeper, the scandalous spoliator, thought himself a count, and called himself COUNT DURIVEAU. His wife, who died very young, left him an only son, Scipio, Viscount Duriveau, if you please.

The happiness, say rather the pride, of Adolphus Duriveau had collected itself, and consisted in these two fine things: to be one of the great landowners of France, and to be called MONSIEUR LE COMTE by his servants, his tradesmen, and his tenant-farmers: at a later period political ambition (in good time we shall explain how) was added to these vanities.

A count, and lord of many millions, he did not imagine any other prospect, any possible felicity for his son; and perhaps still more vain-glorious than covetous, he saw, in this child a new means of parading his opulence and exciting envy. At fifteen, young Scipio, endowed with a superb face, a

precocious intellect, and brought up by a domestic tutor fit to serve in great families, became a new source of pride to his father, quite elated at the idea of introducing this treasure of gentility and impertinence.

There existed at that time in the best company of Paris what was called *young fathers*.

They were moreover young widowers, men of wit and pleasure, bold gamblers, high livers, and were very generally on the best terms with the most *recherché* kept women of Paris; these young fathers, setting out with their principle, in itself a good one—that nothing is more hateful—more fatal in its consequences, than parsimoniousness, and paternal despotism, which, depriving a son of all pleasures, of all free agency, in the hope of making him a little saint, is sure to make him a reprobate instead—these young fathers affected, on the contrary, the most unlimited toleration, and sometimes even still more.

Consequently the count, the father of two charming little girls, of six or seven years old, took them to the theatre, to which his own tender connexions so often called him; and the grace—the infant prattle of these little angels, absolutely delighted the actresses.

It was a part of the plan of education of another young father to hold the first bills of exchange issued by his son. This he styled the *maidenhood of acceptance*. In order to do this, he secretly facilitated loans which appeared very usurious, by which he, the father, of course made no profit, asserting that a young father is the born creditor of his son.

This man, with all the reflection, all the ripeness of experience, sought for, picked out, valued, and—out of his fatherly solicitude—even chose, the first mistress for his son.

Another had made it a principle to intoxicate his dear boy with abominable wine, "in order to inspire him betimes," said he, "with a deep, invincible, and salutary loathing for—*bad wine*."

Two or three of these young fathers, men of the very highest circles, were friends of Count Duriveau. Already very vain of his son's gentility, it seemed to him, in his fond desire to imitate the great, that he would be doing a fine thing to be a young father himself; nothing could be more courteous; for the Marshal de Richelieu had set the example by his behaviour to his son, M. de Fronsac.

Count Duriveau was therefore soon cited among the most sparkish young fathers of Paris; he set his pride in seeing Scipio eclipse the sons of all other young fathers; so that at seventeen Scipio had a hundred guineas a month for his pocket-money, separate apartments in his father's mansion, six horses in the stable, and his seat beside his father in the Omnibus box at the Opera, which entitled him to go behind the scenes.

It is needless to add that Scipio, with his fascinating person and his tender age, was almost the idol of that voluptuous pandemonium, to which he was ceremoniously introduced by his father. Some months after, the stripling began to boast the number of his easy conquests: at eighteen, he had neatly pinked and killed his man, with his father for his second; and more than once, the early dawn surprised the count and his son in the midst of the same riotous debauch.

However strange this system of education may appear, a very slight knowledge of the world will make us confess—

That the social position and the fortune of Viscount Scipio being granted, take any hundred young bloods, rich and unoccupied, and ninety among them, sooner or later, shall lead the life that Scipio did;—with this difference: they will lead such a life, *thanks to the help of infernal usurers*, without the knowledge, or in spite of the remonstrances of their parents, whose inheritance they covet, and long to clutch with an avidity—*almost parricidal*.

This being granted, it will be conceived that young fathers were not deficient in a certain practical good sense, and tried at least to guide and manage themselves those wild freaks of youth which they could not restrain.

No doubt, thinking men will allege that the remedy is as bad as the disease; no doubt it is deplorable to see enormous sums lavishly wasted; it is painful to see so many noblemen wither in early youth, and their good instincts also; to see so often spring up and perish in that vitiated atmosphere the finest understandings; *but all these evils and many others* unavoidably result from that state of things which rules the FAMILY, the RIGHT OF PROPERTY, and above all that great and paramount injustice, the RIGHT OF DESCENT.

It will be readily understood that, living for several years as a young father, the paternal dignity of the count and the filial respect of the *Viscount* had been much qualified and diminished; but this shelve was too steep, this current too impetuous to be gone up again. Many times had the haughty temper, the strong decision of M. Duriveau been subdued by the cold and insolent raillery of his son; more than once, especially of late, and in the teeth of vain and tardy regrets, so far imitating those polite husbands, who, afraid to be jealous, devour their shame and grief. The count, dreading the ridicule of all other men of the same school played his own part with a smile on his lips, and age and grief in his heart; but he was compelled to perform it; for since a long time his son had treated him with that pert familiarity contracted in the midst of a community of degrading pleasures—a familiarity which at first only made him and his friends laugh; all filial respect was therefore nearly obliterated from the soul of this stripling.

Count Duriveau, albeit tending towards fifty, did not appear to be quite forty, so much his tall, slender figure, his active form, his bold and impetuous looks, seemed to tell of youth, energy, and vigour. His complexion was very dark; his teeth brilliantly white, his chin and nose prominent; his eyes blue and very large; his eye-brows, beard, and hair almost jet black, notwithstanding his time of life; you might indeed meet with more regular features, and more attractive ones, than those of the count; but it was impossible to see a more expressive, more sprightly, more resolute and bold a countenance, or one that bespoke a more indomitable will: consequently M. Duriveau inspired almost at all times that reserve, that deference, that fear, which is felt towards haughty and inflexible spirits; but seldom did he excite any sentiments of sympathy or affection.

Still this imperious man exhibited towards his son a lamentable weakness, and he had turned pale and trembled in every limb, on seeing the danger of Mrs. Wilson, so intrepidly daring a real peril. At that moment, and throughout the chase, Count Duriveau had watched the slightest action of the charming widow with an anxiety full of the most tender solicitude; seldom for a single moment did his restless, ardent, and passionate look wander from that enchanting woman, and it was easy to perceive that good breeding and propriety alone prevented him from more openly testifying the resistless sway she exercised over him.

The Count as well as his son had on a black velvet cap, a small red hunting-coat with silver buttons, white deer-skin breeches, and rough boots.

The appearance of the Viscount presented a striking contrast to his father's:—the masculine form of M. Duriveau, his strong and active limbs, manifested a wonderful fulness of life, passion, and force: the Viscount's features, fine and regular as a woman's, seemed already withered by premature excess. Scarce yet turned twenty, his face, which was shaded with silky whiskers as light as his hair, and fair mustachios, was thin and hollow. For some time past, the pallor of exhaustion had taken in those

delicate long-drawn cheeks the ruddy colour of youth. His eyes, which were very large and fine, and darkly brown, were slightly inflamed in the lids by the heating effects of late hours and riotous vigils; for it was only a few days since the youth had left Paris; and at Paris, encouraged by the Count and other young fathers—his friends, this poor child passed not without reason for one of the Coryphees of that vacant, prodigal, emasculating life, of which kept women, lansquenet, the club, the stable, the dinner-table, and the wanton ball-room filled up every hour; in the *prohibited* dance, Scipio had but two equals: one was a peer of France, and a very lively diplomatist, and the other was the Nestor of the *cancan*—the great Chicard.

However, Viscount Scipio prided himself on being already, as he said, surfeited with these pleasures; In fact, he had so long and so often drunk without thirst the most exquisite wines, that now he thought them flat and insipid, and would frequently prefer to take brandy—nay, hot adulterated brandy, in the tavern at the corner. He had grown so used to the coarse and depraved society of the wantons who had initiated him to *love*, and who had been his mistresses, that in his eyes the most seductive was the girl who drank and smoked most, who swore loudest, and, above all, whom he could most despise. She returned his insults and his contempt in the slang of the gaol-yard, which he too could speak very fluently at times; and all this diverted him exceedingly, but with a frigid gravity withal, and phlegmatic insolence: for people never laugh when they have lost the relish for pleasure. As to his senses—premature excess, the enervating effects of wine, and ardent spirits, had dulled and almost destroyed them. Naught of excitement remained for Viscount Scipio but the feverish stimulus of lansquenet, the wagers on the race-course, or certain terrible amours, which will be mentioned hereafter. This youth was not yet twenty-one.

However, although jaded and withered, and despite their impertinent and wearied expression (Viscount Scipio thought himself too old already and too surfeited with pleasure, to care for hunting), his features were still charming; you could not see a finer, more elegant shape than his, or altogether a more fascinating person; such at least were the secret thoughts of Mrs. Wilson's daughter, Miss Raphaela.

Mrs. Melcy Wilson, (a native of France, but the widow of Mr. Stephen Wilson, an American banker) and Miss Raphaela Wilson, chaperoned by M. Alcide Dumolard, absent momentarily, the brother of the senior, and uncle of the junior lady, followed the hunt in the company of Count Duriveau and his son.

If the mythological comparison of Juno and Hebe had not been so frequently employed before, we would apply it to this lady and her daughter;—not that Mrs. Wilson possessed, either in her features or in her carriage, any thing to remind you at all of the severe majesty of the *Queen of Olympus*: on the contrary, nothing could be more alluring, we might even say more roguish, than the pretty face of Mrs. Wilson, although this fascinating woman, with her blue eyes, her black hair, and velvet skin, was then entering her thirty-second year. In citing the names of Juno and Hebe, we only wish to depict the difference that exists between beauty in full maturity and beauty in its first blossom; for Raphaela the daughter was then barely sixteen.

In proportion as the mother's countenance was brisk, airy, and flexible, that of the girl was melancholy and ingenuous. Never have the shady sketches of the English artist, nor even the patrician pencil of Lawrence, come up to that lovely ideal. What tint could represent the colourless transparency of that delicate complexion—the azure of those large eyes, so lively and yet so soft—the polished whiteness of that candid brow encased in nut-brown hair, at once so yielding, so fine, so naturally curled, that her head-dress did not show the slight disorder which is generally the consequence of a long ride on horseback? The pliant ringlets of her hair waved around her ravishing countenance, as light as her own veil of green gauze, which was lifted over one side of her black felt hat.

Beneath the elegant corset of the black riding-habit worn by Mrs. Wilson and her daughter, their elegant shapes, differently charming, were exquisitely designed, more taper, slender, and, so to speak, more chastely delicate, in Raphaela, but fuller, and more voluptuously moulded in her mother.

The shape of their attire made this difference still more sensible: thus Raphaela's dress, as it rose up to the neck and closed with rigid severity, gave nothing to view save a small folded neck-cloth fastened by a narrow silk 'kerchief of the same blue colour as the eyes of the young maiden—whilst the upper dress of Mrs. Wilson, opened in front like a jerkin, though tightly fitted to the waist, discovered a small chamois waistcoat, with gold buttons, which, slightly sundered, allowed you further to perceive a cambric chemisette closed by the hard and elastic contour of two rubies;—in fine, to complete these various shades of costume, as trivial as they are significant, the collar worn by Mrs. Wilson was half turned back over a silk cravat of purple colour, that purple being less deep, rich, and lively, than that of her laughing and enticing lips.

When they had cleared the dangerous obstacle we have spoken of, the countenances of the mother and daughter differed again in their expression: terrified at first by the danger her daughter had run, Mrs. Wilson, seeing her in safety, looked upon her with all the joy and pride of a loving mother; whilst Raphaela, indifferent to a danger that was past, was obstinately watching for the absent look of Scipio.

It is useless to say that Count Duriveau and his son were no less resolute than Mrs. Wilson and her daughter: both, close behind each other, went over the tree; the father with the impetuous ardour of his temper—the son with a kind of disdainful indifference, not wanting in grace, for he was a perfect horseman. He even carried his giddy rashness so far as to choose the moment when his horse was vaulting above the formidable block, to withdraw with his right hand the cigar he was exhaling, and send up a meandering column of blue smoke.

This bravado, if incited by the presence of the two fair riders, and accomplished with the giddy petulance of youth, would have exhibited that charm which is always found in what is dashy, sudden, amorous, and bold; but faithful to his character as a man *used-up* and done with pleasure, Scipio valued himself for showing every where and in every thing, an impassable disdain; his features therefore did not even move whilst Mrs. Wilson and her daughter especially congratulated him on his spirited self-control.

The Count, shocked at his son's behaviour, and choosing his time when neither of the ladies could see or overhear him, whispered to Scipio with an accent apparently cordial and familiar, but under which lurked a lively wrath and dissatisfaction hardly restrained by the presence of the two women, or his usual toleration as a young father.

"What are you thinking about, Scipio? you are not even polite to Miss Wilson, and yet——"

"What now! do you know you are playing in a new character, old chap?" answered Scipio, interrupting his father, and lighting a second cigar. "It is true this is an *honourable* affair—but that's the very reason you are so despotic. O thou wretched author of my life!"

And he carelessly threw away the remnant of his cigar.

Accustomed as he was to this callous nonsense, unfortunately encouraged by himself, M. Duriveau

could not just then, and for special reasons, subdue the anger provoked by this answer: so he replied to his son in a low but firm voice:

"A truce with your jests—I am speaking to you seriously; your behaviour is highly improper and unbecoming; to-night *I'll talk to you*, and——"

"Mrs. Wilson," cried the Viscount, with his cigar in his mouth, and once more interrupting his father.

"What 's the matter, Scipio?" asked the pretty widow, turning round, to the Count's great uneasiness.

"Whenever you wish to see *Papa* in his glory, request him to assume the part of a noble father—he does it magnificently."

An increasing scorn and swelling passion contracted the features of M. Duriveau; but his face was forced into a smile at Mrs. Wilson's first glance, as she gaily replied:

"And you, my dear Scipio, you play to admiration the part of a young wag. But here comes our discreet protector, who will remind you, if need be, of the respect that is due to a woman of *my age*, you careless fellow."

Then addressing the new comer, Mrs. Wilson added:

"Come, come, brother, make haste."

The two women and the huntsman had, as we explained before, collected on the other side of the tree, surrounded by the hounds, still at fault, precisely when M. Alcide Dumolard, Mrs. Wilson's brother, appeared in front of that hindrance.

Monsieur Alcide Dumolard, the surviving husband of the late departed Madame Dumolard, who bore his bereavement very lightly, was not above forty, with a smooth beardless face, and a paunch that quite disfigured him. There are no means of describing that broad visage and those pendant cheeks, those eyes almost buried in a bed of grease, that narrow skull, but by comparing them to those mandarin figures one sees on the old vases of China; the enormous girth and formidable loins of Monsieur Dumolard, whose back was quite worthy of his abdomen, threatened every moment to burst the button-holes of his short scarlet riding-coat; in a word, nothing could be more grotesque than that broad fat face, over-abounding on every side the small black velvet hunting-cap, set on the crown of his head. Monsieur Dumolard had prudently chosen to ride a large bay pony of herculean strength, built after the mould of a stout drayman's horse, very essential qualities in a poor quadruped bestridden by such a capacious mass.

"It is needless to say that Monsieur Alcide Dumolard stopped like a prudent rider and with all due diffidence, before the overturned tree, which Viscount Scipio observing, he said to him very coolly and pertly:

"Come, Dumolard, why do n't you leap over it, my fat fellow? Do n't be afraid, you are sure at all events to light upon a cushion soft and downy."

"Leap—over *that?* Come now, that 's too good; this is one of those freaks which we let alone, my loving friend, when a man has one hundred and fifty thousand francs a year to look after," answered the big man, puffing out his cheeks with a look of self-importance, and looking about for a less hazardous passage.

"I can't see what your one hundred and fifty thousand francs a-year have to do with your leaping," resumed Scipio, drily tittering: "unless it be your fortune that makes you so fat and inflated. Are you then stuffed out with lingots? or wadded with bank-notes?"

"Hold your saucy tongue," cried the bulky fellow, with an air of anxiety, "that is a very bad joke of yours. To exclaim in the very midst of these woods, this region of wolves and starving outcasts, that I am stuffed out with bank-notes! If any one overheard you, who knows but I might have my throat cut?"

Then, turning to the bugleman, who had that moment come up with his dogs on the other side of the tree, Dumolard cried to him:

"Well, brave fellow! Is there any other way to go round? I am not one of your break-neck huntsmen, not I."

"Take to the left, sir," answered the huntsman, "about fifty yards from this, you will find a narrow lane which will lead you hither."

"A narrow lane!" said Scipio: "it 's all up with you, my fat friend; how can you get through? you are only fit for the king's highway."

Monsieur Dumolard shrugged up his shoulders, turned his horse, and followed the bugleman's instructions.

And now let us explain what fell out in consequence of the pack having lost the *scent*, at two hundred steps, or thereabouts, from the cave of Bête-Puante, the poacher.

CHAPTER V.

A SAGACIOUS HOUND.

THE hounds, still dumb and baffled, went over, in every sense, that part of the wood where the poacher had cut off the scent of the fox, the old bugleman had just overtaken the pack; stimulated by his master's presence and that of his companions, the huntsman examined with the closest care the enclosed space, bent over his horse, his head stooping towards the ground, trying to discover the paw-marks of the game, and encouraging his hounds with the usual cries:—

"*Seek dogs, seek then.*"

Count Duriveau, himself a good sportsman, and one who carried along with him into his pleasures all the fire and impetuosity of his nature, and glad above all to conceal the irritation which Scipio's conduct had roused in him, had left the ladies to assist his huntsman, who was then supporting the hounds at the top of his voice.

Whilst the Count displayed this feverish activity, so characteristic of him, Scipio had sunk back in his saddle, and was swinging his left leg about, listening to the jingle of his spur, as he struck it against his stirrup, and watching the light pinnacles of smoke issuing up from his cigar, and not uttering a word either to Mrs. Wilson or her daughter, though he was now close beside them.

Availing herself of a moment when her mother had turned her head to look at the hounds, Raphaela moved her horse up to the side of Scipio's, and with a face full of wounded pride, said to him, in a low, trembling voice:—

"Scipio—what have I done to offend you?"

"Nothing," said the Viscount, still looking complacently on the light acclivities of the blueish fume of his cigar.

"Scipio," resumed the young girl in a feeling and broken voice, and hardly restraining the tears which rose to her eyes; "Scipio, what means this cold—this icy behaviour,—this harsh treatment? What then have I done to thee?"

"Nothing," answered the Viscount, with the same congealing disdain.

"Read this, and perhaps,—you will have pity," said the maiden, hastily slipping into Scipio's hand a little note which a few moments before she had withdrawn from her glove.

The Viscount put the note heedlessly into his waistcoat pocket, and, observing that Raphaela was about to speak to him again, he raised his voice and, addressing Mrs. Wilson, who at the time was intently watching the various evolutions of the pack, he exclaimed:—

"I say, Mrs. Wilson, do you really think that there is so much pleasure in a hunt? Confess, now, that it's a mere conventional amusement? like the opera—and *marrying for love.*"

As Scipio uttered these insolent words, Raphaela hastily let down over her face, as if by chance, the short green veil floating over her hat; so that when her mother turned to answer the Viscount, she did not perceive the tears escaping from her daughter's eyes.

During the hunt, Mrs. Wilson, notwithstanding her gaiety and seeming good spirits, had often stolen an attentive look at Scipio; and consequently her face was occasionally overcast with astonishment and a vacant uneasiness, as the young widow noticed and wondered at the impertinent and heartless indifference which the Viscount was practising on Raphaela. Then, after communing with herself, doubtless, the lady's brow cleared up, whilst with a smile of the most pungent raillery she replied to his question:

"I will wager with you, dear Scipio, that at twelve years old, instead of being satisfied with one of those pretty jackets which are so well suited to children, you were already longing for a frightful coat, in order to look like a *little gentleman.*"

In spite of his impudence, this reply to his own pert question somewhat puzzled Scipio, who for all that replied with his customary coolness:

"I do n't understand you, my dear Mrs. Wilson."

"Why, nothing can be plainer, dear Scipio; the spoiled child, who at twelve years of age wants to be a *little gentleman*, would pass for a man jaded with life when he comes to be twenty."

This was touching Scipio's affectation to the quick—an affectation unfortunately countenanced by long habit and the abuse of the most degrading recreations.

The Viscount, swallowing his spleen, replied with still greater disregard and coolness:

"Psha! me put on and play the part of a man *jaded with life?*"

"Yes, and very badly you play it for a true connoisseur, my poor Scipio; but, unfortunately, well enough to deceive an ingenuous spectator."

And Mrs. Wilson, after casting an affectionate look at her daughter, and desirous to appease the anxiety of Raphaela, whose dejection she had several times remarked, said with a merry smile:

"Go, go, my dear Scipio; do n't flatter yourself you can pass for an old man when you are only a young one;—such affectation stops short mid-way. You wear the costume of the day—(that is all. Strange as it is, and so ridiculous too—you know an *old woman* is privileged to say what she likes)—it can never disfigure you. In vain you call *hunting a conventional amusement*, for you put your neck in jeopardy when you follow the hounds: in vain you style *marriage* and *love* as *pleasures of convention*—for—but no—we won't answer him, Raphaela, on such a subject; we should be too triumphant."

So saying, Mrs. Wilson turned gaily round to her daughter, whose lovely countenance had resumed all its serenity at her mother's words—adding:—

"What, the *Opera a conventional amusement!* and yet when Madame Slultz but sings, when Carlotta Grisi dances, when Basquine sings and dances together, your stalls and boxes burst into a roar of delight—into a storm of acclamation. And in the transport of your admiration for those two marvels of talent and grace, and especially for Mademoiselle Basquine, half gazelle, half nightingale, your gloves are rent upon your hands—and yet you pretend to be *jaded with life!!*"

When Mrs. Wilson pronounced the name of Basquine, a singular expression started up and partially flushed Scipio's features: irony, suppressed pride, and bold defiance, mingled together in that flush.

Directing an inquisitive and searching glance at Mrs. Wilson, Scipio said to her, still with immovable phlegm, and without letting go his constant cigar:

"Why not fancy me at once in love with Basquine?"

"What! do men *jaded with life* ever fall in love? See how you forget your part!" said Mrs. Wilson, laughing; then with a look of mild gravity, she went on in a tone of affectionate earnestness: "let us be serious, this once, my dear Scipio; yes, I believe you to be sick of pleasure, and I am delighted at it; yes, I think you are weary of it — but weary only of every false pleasure, every hollow and fallacious enjoyment; and thus I believe that whatever is good, sincere, generous, delicate, and lofty, will afford you the irresistible charm of novelty in virtue and truth; a charm that will attach you for ever to those objects which alone are worthy of a man of sense and spirit like you. But here comes your father," she continued, but in a mirthful tone; "do n't go and tell him, rash boy, that I too, in my turn, have been speaking to you like a *noble mother.*"

Then turning towards Monsieur Duriveau, who was riding up:

"Well, Count! how goes the hunt?"

"I have nothing left to do, madam, but to apologise for inviting and bringing you to an entertainment which ends so unsatisfactorily."

"How so?"

"We must give up all hopes of taking the fox."

"Why?"

"Because the hounds have unfortunately been taken at fault, and there is no recovering the scent."

"So the game is lost?"

"Yes, madam, the pack has lost scent of the fox on this side of the trunk of the tree: we have done our best to recover it—in vain; we have searched all round the tree, thinking it might conceal the mouth of a kennel,—all to no purpose; there is no understanding it."

"Make yourself easy, my dear sir," said the lively widow, "we still retain the pleasure we have had."

"And likewise the hope of finishing the day with you, for you still mean to come with Raphaela and Dumolard, and dine at the Tremblay, with a few of our neighbours."

"Chosen among the most influential electors in the country, I 'll be bound," said the widow, smiling; "for I know your ambitious designs. Come, I 'll exert myself amongst them to gain all their votes; only place me next to the most untractable, and you shall see."

"I can fully trust to your prowess," said the Count, smiling in turn; "if you plead my cause, it is gained. Come, let us bid farewell to the hunt. We have only to return to the cross of the cross-way where your carriage is waiting for you. Now, Latrace, leash your hounds."

"Well, child, we are breaking up the chase," said Mrs. Wilson, turning towards Raphaela, whom she rode up to, and whispered something in her ear, which in a moment made that youthful face brighten into smiles.

Just then, Monsieur Alcide Dumolard, who prudently kept his horse at a slow trot, having made a pretty long round, rode into the circle, and said to the Count, with a doubtful aspect:—

"What is the meaning of yonder troop of fellows armed with clubs and pitch-forks, who are making this way, and shouting every now and then to each other?"

"I really know nothing about it, my dear Dumolard," said the Count, rather surprised.

The old bugleman perceiving his master look at him with an inquiring glance, ventured to say with a degree of diffidence:—

"They are the people of the borough, my lord; they are come to support Monsieur Beaucadet and his *gensdarme*."

"On what account?" said M. Duriveau, still more astonished.

"To track a very dangerous robber and murderer, escaped from the prison of Bourges, who has been hiding in these woods since yesterday."

"A murderer! hidden in these woods?" cried Monsieur Dumolard.

"'Yes, sir," answered the huntsman. "This very morning, he was seen at a distance by some woodmen, and——"

But suddenly the bugleman stopped in his speech, and seeming to be listening to some remote sound, went a few paces aside.

"What! a blood-thirsty murderer!" exclaimed Alcide Dumolard, shaking every moment with retrospective fright.

"I, too, who was just now alone; I might have met him. And that thoughtless Scipio, who talked aloud of my being wadded with bank-notes—what an odious jest was that!"

"Hold your tongue, most worthy sir," said the Count, with a shrug; "there is no danger at all, and you might frighten your sister, who, very fortunately, has been talking to her daughter, and has not heard a word of the matter."

"My lord," said Latrace, now returning to the group, after long and attentively listening, "my lord, we need not yet despair."

"What do you mean?"

"Lumineau begins to bark."

"I hear nothing yet. Are you positive?"

"Perfectly so; he is the prince of hounds: he must have led the pursuit, as he always, does by at least a mile. Stay, my lord, do n't you hear?"

"Why, truly," said the Count, listening again, "yes—I hear him now; but where is he?"

"About two hundred steps off, by the little glade near the rocks."

"Faith, ladies," said the Count, riding towards them, "here's a strange turn of fortune: just now, we were in despair, now we hope again; if we catch our fox, it will be a perfect miracle, and Lumineau will be the worthy sorcerer."

"That 's always his way," said the old huntsman.

And off he sped full gallop through the wood towards the glade, adjacent to which lay the poacher's den.

"There is nothing more charming than hope succeeding to despair," said Mrs. Wilson, with a significant look to her daughter. "Come, Count, come and see whether the miraculous Lumineau, as you call him, will effect the prodigy expected of him."

Whereupon the widow spurred her horse and gal-

lopped off, followed by the cavalcade, and taking the same direction as the bugleman.

Monsieur Alcide Dumolard now remained alone.

For it requires some skill to guide a horse through a forest of thick fir-trees, planted like a chess-board. Dumolard, unwilling to force his steed, followed the hunters at a distance, sometimes walking, sometimes at a gentle trot. Nevertheless, when he saw the space between his companions and him grow wider every minute, he felt a cold shiver seize upon him; for the thought of the blood-thirsty assassin whom they were tracking in that wood returned every moment to his fancy.

"In a moment of despair such a robber will do any thing; misfortune travels so fast—these woods are so gloomy and lonesome!" muttered the Colossus, trotting through the trees as fast as his *prudence* would let him. "Duriveau knows all this, and yet away he goes—without caring for me. Some people are so desperately selfish! And his son to call out that I am wadded with bank-notes! Luckily I can still see them—down yonder—through the trees. Red jackets are so far good, that they serve to guide one."

So saying, Monsieur Dumolard, urged on by fear and the hope of overtaking the rest of his party, took advantage of a clearer part of the wood, and put his horse to the gallop.

"So, so! I am coming up to them at last," said he, panting with fatigue. "I will call out for them to wait for me."

And without slackening his pace, that he might continue to gain ground, he cried out:—

"Sister—Melcy—wait for me!"

Mrs. Wilson most probably did not hear the gasping voice of her brother; for, following behind her daughter, she vanished at the very moment she was appealed to, by a side road through a very thick cluster of trees.

"Duriveau! wait for me, will you? Zounds!" cried Dumolard at the top of his voice.

Count Duriveau vanished, and his son too, along with him.

"How scandalous is this indifference," cried the poor Falstaff, with as much bitterness as terror; "but, God be praised! I see the way they took. They turned to the left, and——"

But here he stopped short; for his horse suddenly fell back on his haunches; and this jerk was so violent that poor Dumolard, thrown upon his saddle bow, was near pitching over his horse's head.

He settled once more on his saddle, and then perceived the cause of the accident which had so suddenly checked his horse: it was a large pit, perfectly formed, eight feet wide, and six feet in depth; the said pit went right across the way and filled it.

At the sight of this large gaping mouth, which intercepted his passage, Monsieur Dumolard was overcome with despair; he perceived at the edge of the ditch the foot-prints of the hunters' horses who had all cleared the impediment. Monsieur Dumolard no longer hoped to gain them; he would rather have died than have tried to leap over that frightful ditch. To turn back would be to remove still farther from his party, and the sun was fast going down: and at this time they were in the season of the equinox, when night succeeds almost instantly to day.

"They will leave me to be murdered by that bandit," said he, groaning. "Then my red coat is so glaringly visible — he will see me three miles off! how frightful to think of! If I call for help, I shall rouse the robber! But let us ride along by the ditch—it may lead to a path."

Monsieur Dumolard followed the ditch till he came to the spot where it bent back, adjoining a copse of impenetrable oaks; to plunge into this dark labyrinth of twining branches, twisting the one round the other, without any path beneath them—seemed to him quite as perilous a feat as to overleap the ditch itself; for to penetrate such a clump of trees, he must needs loose the reins to his horse, stoop his head, and trust to his stars.

In spite of his alarm, Dumolard seeing the night approaching, and fearful if he stood there he might draw the robber's attention upon him and his scarlet coat, chose the less of two evils and tried to force a way through the copse, so as to be able to overtake his party. But at that very moment a sound was heard close at hand like the noise of a fierce wild boar bursting through the close branches of the wood.

But we must now return to the sagacious hound and explain in two words what he had achieved.

After having thus, like the rest of the hounds, sought vainly on every side to recover the scent of the fox, worthy Lumineau, taught by experience and assisted by his wonderful instinct, had been led to this logical reasoning, to wit: that the fox being mostly cunning enough to take very wide leaps, to cut off the scent, and by that means to puzzle your trusty dogs who hunt merely for the sake of their *honour* (his flesh being repugnant to their taste), these brave hounds, in order to recover the traitor's track, who after all could not have vanished through the air, ought to remove by degrees from the spot where the track of his steps was interrupted—describing larger and larger circles as they went, and would be certain at last to come upon the fugitive's course. Truly, in spite of the two or three incredible bounds, thanks to which he had sundered the scent, the fox could not help resuming his usual course, and continue his progress, either to the right or to the left either within or without the spot where his track had been suspended. Now, the circular and progressive quest of the hounds, embracing a radius which constantly widened, could not fail, necessarily at some given spot to indicate the passage of the game.

This manœuvre, in language of venery, is called taking the *wide compass*.

So putting at once into practice this excellent theory, and leaving the rest of the pack, which still persisted in seeking for the track at the old spot, Lumineau tried the ground with the point of his muzzle, and began to describe at full gallop a set of circles which widened as he went, and thus he gradually reached the glade, through which he crossed, then the rocks among which the trap was laden with stones and brambles serving to mask the entrance to the den where Bamboche had taken refuge.

The fox, we must not forget, had only rested a moment on these mossy stones to take a new spring; but thanks to the subtlety of Lumineau's smell, the emanation struck his olfactory nerves; and immediately his long triumphant barkings resounded, and drew to the spot the already despairing huntsman.

After this first success, Lumineau finding, beyond these stones, that the scent was broken a second time, ought to have continued his circular pursuit; for, thirty steps off, he would have come full upon the track of the fox, then uninterrupted; but Lumineau felt a hollow sound beneath his paws, at the entrance, so well concealed, of the poacher's haunt; and may be excused for believing that the fox was earthed near those stones; the noble hound howled louder and louder, raking the ground with his fore-paws, and soon through the brambles and the earth he had scratched off, he laid open a part of the opening to the den.

During this time, first the bugleman, then the Count, his son, Mrs. Wilson, and Raphaela successively came up into the glade.

"The fox is ours, he has earthed himself!" cried the old huntsman, as he witnessed his hound so madly pulling out the soil.

And then jumping from his horse, he ran, armed

with the handle of his whip, to assist Lumineau in widening the hole.

Count Duriveau, giving way to the impetuous spirit of the chase, and to the delight of a success, recently unhoped for, and without caring for appearances, knelt down beside the bugleman in order to help him to clear as quickly as possible the mouth of the poacher's lurking hole which he mistook for that of the fox.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LURKING HOLE.

AFTER some minutes, Count Duriveau and his bugleman had removed the stones cemented with earth and overgrown with brambles, which shrouded the trap-door of the poacher's haunt, the asylum in which Bamboche had sought shelter.

Mrs. Wilson and her daughter eagerly awaited the issue of this new incident in the hunt, and leant over the necks of their horses; Scipio, himself, in spite of his callous disdain, partook of the general curiosity.

"But this is no kennel," all at once cried Count Duriveau on perceiving the timber of the trap-door denuded of the stones and brambles under which it had been hidden.

Then detecting, through the strong wedges of wood, the darkness of the cave, the Count, now more surprised than ever, went on to say:—

"It looks like the entrance to a robber's cave."

"A robber's cave," said Mrs. Wilson, gaily, "this is surely very romantic: it is not every body who sees one; now-a-days robbers' caves are scarce."

"Whether it be a robber's cave or not," said old Latrace, "our fox must be in it," and he raised up the trap-door, which, turning on its wicker hinges, disclosed a steep narrow descent.

"It is singular," said the Count, musing, "that such a lurking hole should exist in my forest without my ever hearing of it. You knew nothing about it either, did you, Latrace?" asked he of the bugleman.

"Not I, my lord."

And for the first time since the discovery of the haunt, the huntsman—for some private reason, no doubt—seemed disconcerted.

"I will examine this lurking hole myself, and know where it leads to," said Count Duriveau.

"My lord need not take the trouble of the search upon himself," said Latrace, urging on Lumineau, "we shall see directly if the fox is earthed there. *Seek*, Lumineau, *find*, good dog!" added the huntsman, showing the hound the mouth of the den.

The dog plunged in.

The Count, heedless of his bugleman's remarks, was preparing to follow Lumineau, after delivering his horse to the care of one of the keepers, when Mrs. Wilson said to him:—

"Mr dear Count, take care; it may be imprudent to venture in alone."

"What childishness, madam," said the Count, smiling; "do you think there is any lion or tiger hidden there and about to rush out? Alas? these woods are too mean for so royal a guest. Allow me therefore to leave you a moment, for my curiosity, I acknowledge, is extremely excited."

"Be peaceful, lady," said Scipio, tittering, "I will share my father's glorious danger with him."

So the young man got down from his horse, and drew near the Count.

"This is strange indeed," said the latter, who, standing on one of the steps cut in the earth, was looking through the darkness of the cave; "it looks like the reflection of a light."

"We are reaching the supernatural!" said Scipio, fixing his tortoise-shell eye-glass between his two lids.

The count was about to descend into the cave, when the sound of many steps approaching from different sides attracted his attention and that of the rest of the party; the Count, with one foot on the uppermost step and the other outside, stood still, on beholding as they entered the glade by several points, some thirty countrymen, wretchedly clad and armed, some with flails, others with pitchforks, and a few with scythes and knotty clubs.

When these different groups met together, the several leaders, who appeared to have been directing them, exchanged these speeches the moment they caught sight of one another:—

"Well?"

"Nothing—what luck with you?"

"Nothing either, and yet we have searched every bush."

"And we have peeped behind the bough of every tree as if hunting after squirrels."

"For our parts, we have been down into every hole or pit."

"And yet nothing have we found — nothing at all."

"Perhaps old daddy Lancelot, who came out full upon M. Beaucadet, may have had more luck; perhaps he has alighted on the robber."

"What means this troop of vagrants by roving thus through my woods?" said the Count frowning, to his bugleman.

"These are the men employed to search the woods and track the robber I mentioned to you just now, my lord."

"A robber! what robber?" cried Mrs. Wilson, drawing towards the Count with her daughter.

"Desiring not to alarm you, madam," said the Count, smiling, "I had concealed from you this incident which, together with the discovery of the cave, has made a very romantic day of this. In a word, they allege that a robber escaped out of the prison at Bourges, has taken refuge in these woods."

"And you, who were going to venture into this cavern!" cried Mrs. Wilson with dismay, "reflect that the man may be hidden therein."

"That is true," said the Count, hastening back to the mouth of the den, which he had left to speak to the young widow, "the villain may indeed be concealed here, and I must discover whether he is or not."

"Stop—in the name of heaven!" exclaimed the lady, softly gliding from her horse; then hastily drawing towards the Count:

"If the man is lurking there," said she, "he will defend himself with desperation! Let me conjure you not to be rash."

"My timid yet charming friend," answered the Count, laughing, "just now when I saw you clear a most perilous impediment, I also bid you not be rash! Allow me to follow your example."

Scipio, having assisted Raphaela to alight, whispered a few words to the maiden and then led her to her mother, who, turning to the Viscount:

"Scipio, assist me to dissuade your father from committing so imprudent and dangerous an act. We must not let him attempt, single-handed, to arrest the robber who may be hidden in this den."

"Certainly," said Scipio, tittering, to his father, "your devotion is heroical, sublime, but rather too constabulary; come, do n't take the bread out of the mouths of these worthy *thief-takers;* since there are *gensdarme* within call, Latrace will get to horse and fetch them here."

"Careless as he is, Scipio is right this time," said Mrs. Wilson to the Count. "Let me entreat you to forbear, and not take any personal part in the arrest."

"Scipio is wrong, lady," replied the Count resolutely, "the duty of every honest man is to arrest a culprit, especially when it is a case of danger."

"Hold your tongue: you brow-beat me, and

speak like a police officer in a fix," said Scipio, pushing his father with his elbow,

The cold and insolent jeering of Scipio once more provoked the Count, who for fear of a still more vexatious scene felt constrained to tolerate these taunts in the presence of a woman he adored, and whom he expected to move by an act of spirit, which besides was incontestable; but reduced to silence, he subdued his anger, shrugged up his shoulders, and advanced without hesitation to the mouth of the cavern.

"Friends," said Mrs. Wilson to the peasants, "do not forsake the Count: follow him, defend him if need be."

Count Durivean was an object of dread to his tenantry; they knew how harsh he was to the farmers, they called to mind the inflexible rigour with which he punished the least infringement of his rights as a landlord; his imperative language, his haughty manners, his severe aspect had always inspired them both with terror and dislike; therefore, instead of heeding the lady's appeal and surrounding the Count as he prepared to enter the den, one of the peasants muttered out:

"If his lordship wishes to arrest the robber himself, let him do it,—as for us, we do n't care about it."

"I know you do n't, you cowards," answered the Count disdainfully.

"Cowards—nay," said one poor devil with white lips, and features grown haggard through fever, "cowards, say you—should the robber hurt me, my wife and children would be the sufferers—they have nobody else to depend upon."

"Cowardly, brutish race!" said the Count with bitter contempt. "Their only care in the matter was to come here and howl in a body, to break and ransack my woods, scare away my game or steal it if they could. For them it is but a day of sloth and disorder; that 's what they delight in!"

"'Twas not for our pleasure we came here, my lord," said another countryman, timorously; "the mayor summoned us in the name of the law, and for poor people like us—a day taken from our labour—what is it but a day without bread?"

"Indeed! That, then, is the reason why on Sundays the tavern overflows with drunkards," replied the Count with increasing irony; "if, for want of work, your Sunday is a day without bread, it certainly is not a day without wine; for you get as drunk as brutes. Nonsense! formerly I was weak enough to be the dupe of your pitiful complaints; but now I know you better."

"Come, now you improve," said Scipio to his father, "you rise again in my esteem; but just now, I must confess you were becoming very soft, like any child *in leading strings*."

The meek and peaceful peasants, broken in and inured to every kind of submission, by poverty, wretchedness, and an obligatory deference to those who live upon them, void of all self-respect, the necessary consequence of servitude combined with ignorance, these peasants listened sorrowfully but without anger to the harsh reproaches of their master; nevertheless one of their number, a grey-headed old man, answered bashfully to the taunt about their Sunday laziness.

"God himself rested on the seventh day—the poor must do the same."

"Enough," said the Count haughtily, "I will do what none of you dares, and no wonder."

Then prompted by his own true courage as well as to show his superiority to his tenantry, whom he really considered as an inferior species, the Count, disregarding the entreaties of Mrs. Wilson and her daughter, entered boldly and unarmed into the cavern, after making a sign to Latrace not to follow him.

Whether he had forgotten to give the same command to his son, or whether he had relied on his assistance, he was followed by Scipio; who merely stopped a moment to light another cigar, and instantly went behind his father with that phlegmatic indifference which belonged to him, after saying to the widow:

"Well—pray for us both: let it be a chorus—something after the fashion of the prayer in Moses."

Whereupon beating his dusty boots with the lash of his riding whip, he carelessly followed the Count's steps into the den.

When they had gone down eight or ten steps coarsely hewn out of the earth, the father and son found themselves in the middle of a spacious grotto, which was hollowed by nature out of the rocks, the upper part of which rose abruptly in the middle of the copse. Among these external rocks, chance or human hand had formed an opening half concealed by the ivy and brambles; it led into the cavern, and gave sufficient access to the air and daylight. This luminous ray, increased by the pale light of a small resinous candle, injected a strange funereal glimmer, by the aid of which Count Durivean caught sight of a spectacle which made him recoil with a shudder.

Bamboche himself had shuddered with emotion at the sight of the picture; but then, the wanderer's feelings were heightened by a recollection which had struck him with grief as well as terror.

At the farther end of the grot, raised upon a sort of platform composed of stones piled upon each other, stood a cradle woven with rushes, and in that cradle, strewed with fresh rosy heath, lay an infant recently dead; its look was so placid, its cheek so fair and ruddy, that it seemed like almost to be sleeping; it was not above a month old; and at the foot of the cradle burned a candle of rosin, by way of funeral taper.

Through the gloom of this den they descried in a corner a wooden box, instead of a bed; it was filled with dry fern; beside this rustic couch they perceived a narrow opening, like that of a passage in a coal-pit; a man could pass along it on all-fours; the slope of this long channel arose, at the back part of the cavern, to the level with the earth beyond, where it extended to, as was proved by a dim bluish light, produced by the reflection of the leaves. This second issue from the haunt, uncovered as it was, will account for the disappearance of Bamboche.

The Viscount came up with his father precisely at the moment that he drew back with a shudder from the humble and secret funeral rites of the departed babe, laid out in its cradle strewn with fresh fern. Even supposing that the Viscount had been slightly startled at the sight of a picture so simple, touching, and painful to behold, still his character as a man used-up and jaded with life, would have forced him to hide the impression; but the appalling dearth of heart of this stripling, withered so quickly in his youth in the tainted atmosphere he had lived in since the age of fifteen, was not affected, as most people were fain to believe, but loudly and impudently proclaimed. So when his father, yielding in his own despite to an involuntary feeling of pity and concern, said to him in a voice somewhat altered, and forgetting the grievances he meant to reproach him with on the subject of Miss Wilson.

"Scipio, look there—at that poor dead infant."

The callous boy set his eye-glass to his lid, and exclaimed:

"Egad! I see it well enough: a modest country girl's frailty first withdrawn, then defunct; an episode in the life of a village beauty." Then looking round him, and pointing out to his father with his whip the mouth of the second issue from the den, he added: "If what these stupid clowns call *the robber* had been skulking here, he must have crept out yonder; so it 's no robber no fox; both our hunts have miscarried. I say! what a pretty thing is the innocence of rustic morals? After this, will you place

any faith in the new milk and fresh eggs of your country bumpkins?"

Then turning on his heels, the Viscount prepared to leave the cavern.

Count Duriveau, in spite of his native harshness, felt at first shocked and humiliated at the heartless indifference of his son, who had witnessed his own emotion; but Scipio's last words agreeing with the Count's favourite opinion, and supporting his own views, and his unalterable contempt for the race, he said to his son:

"I have long known that the rural mob is as corrupt as that of the town—the dung in the field is as foul as the mire of the city!"

Then, as usual, hurried along by the impetuosity of his first impulse, the Count caught up the cradle to his son's great surprise, rushed up the steps with this sad burden, and addressing the peasants who were anxious to know what was going on in the haunt, exclaimed in a voice of thunder:—

"Look here, you interesting countrymen, you unhappy, and above all, virtuous mortals! this is what your daughters do with their children when they are found inconvenient."

And he set the cradle down on a piece of stone.

During the momentary absence of Count Duriveau, Latrace, at Mrs. Wilson's earnest request, had been to fetch Monsieur Beaucadet and a few *gensdarme*, and that officer had just arrived with two of his men, and was alighting from his horse at the moment the Count addressed his awful apostrophe to the group of peasants.

"A little dead child!" cried the countrymen, drawing back in affright, after casting one look at the cradle.

"Oh! mother — how dreadful!" muttered Raphaela, throwing her arms about Mrs. Wilson's neck.

"Oh, sir! you forget my daughter!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilson, looking at the Count, and speaking in a voice of bitter reproachfulness. Duriveau felt when too late the fearful impropriety of his behaviour.

"An in-fan-ti-cide," said Monsieur Beaucadet, sententiously sounding his words, as was his wont on all grave occasions, "an in-fan-ti-cide," repeated he, openinghis way through the crowd of peasants to reach the cradle which he took possession of, "wait a bit—this is in my line, it belongs to my functions."

Then, looking attentively at the body of the infant, and discovering something which the Count had been unable to distinguish in the gloom of the cavern, the officer exclaimed:—

"What, a paper! the poor innocent has a paper round its neck; please to attend all of you!"

Every witness of the scene, save Mrs. Wilson and her trembling girl, drew round Monsieur Beaucadet and the cradle with eager curiosity, and whispered to each other:—

"There's a paper at the child's neck."

And truly, there was a paper tied to the neck of the babe with a piece of black tape; Beaucadet unfolded it hastily, and in the busy intemperance of his zeal he read it suddenly, without first taking note of its contents.

The paper contained these words, delivered in a loud voice by the officer:—

"I wish my son to be called Scipio Duriveau, after his father."

"How odd!" said Scipio, lighting his fourth cigar with immovable serenity.

Raphaela evinced a courage worthy of a heroine. At this disclosure, she felt a sharp, acute pain in her bosom. For a moment her strength forsook her, and she caught hold of her mother's arm to prevent herself from falling; then rousing herself against this shock, which was as sudden as it was dreadful, she found sufficient strength to support the blow. A moment after, she exchanged with her m other a long expressive look not to be defined.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SANS-CULOTTE.

"I WISH my son to be called Scipio Duriveau after his father."

The reading of this note, the astounding apathy, of the Viscount, this audacious coolness, had stupefied every witness of the scene.

As for the Count, he was standing without moving or speaking, and looking upon his son with angry amazement, as he reflected on the fatal consequences which this revelation must have on the mind of Raphaela. She clung convulsively to her mother, fixing upon her with intense anguish her large blue eyes, overflowing with tears. The peasants, in spite of their mild and timid disposition, exasperated by the imprudent callousness of Scipio, began to give audible vent to their muttered indignation. Monsieur Beaucadet, abashed by his awkwardness (for he professed the greatest deference for the Count, his model of a landlord) felt a most pitiful embarrassment, and kept looking vacantly at the fatal note, whilst the rumble of the storm increased every moment. Suddenly, remembering the signature of the note, which until then he had generously withheld, he hoped by denouncing the name of the victim to avert the growing irritation from the seducer, and anticipate a dangerous explosion. So the officer resumed in a tone of authority:

"The note is signed by the unfortunate,—by the despicable.—In a word you need not know more; it is signed."

"The note is signed," they muttered in an under voice.

"Yes—the in-fan-ti-cide has signed it; the silly wretch has signed it," said Beaucadet, with his most solemn air; "she has signed it, and her name is—"

A kind of rustle of anxiety and anguish sped from mouth to mouth among the countrymen, who hung, as it were, to the lips of Beaucadet.

"It is—little Bruyare, the turkey feeder at the farm of *Grand-Genevre*."

On hearing that name, in spite of his immoveable assurance, Scipio did indeed shudder, and the blood rushed to his face; for a moment, his pale countenance was flushed; but Raphaela, whose eyes were rivetted to his face, was the only person present who remarked the transient emotion he had been unable to suppress.

When the peasants heard that the guilty victim was Bruyare, a young girl only sixteen, who was considered to possess a kind of supernatural influence, and whose singular beauty, delightful pleasantry, and melting kindness were so popular in that poor neighbourhood, abounding in superstitious ignorance, they felt their wrath and indignation kindle still more against the Viscount.

Beaucadet saw, but too late, that he had only aggravated Scipio's situation; the murmur, which before had been scarcely above breath, now broke out into complaints and imprecations.

"Bruyare! poor girl!"

"The good genius of the country!"

"So mild, too, so gentle!"

"To injure her, was a shameful crime."

"But *gentlemen* dare do any thing to hurt the poor."

"And now they say she killed her own child."

"What she? no, no, never!"

"They call us brutes, too! cowards! suppose we are brutes, the time comes at last even for brutes to turn upon their oppressors."

"Yes, yes, you may smoke in our faces and mock

at us, sir," said one of them to Scipio, "but we 're not afraid of you."

"Dear little Bruyare," chimed in a more pathetic voice, "she is in some sort our sister; for, though she be somewhat *bewitched*, every one loves her as if he were her brother, because she uses her *charm* to do good to us all."

This *crescendo* of recrimination was becoming alarming. To the anger excited by Scipio's insulting audacity was united the dislike which his father's rigour and disdain had universally created —this dislike had lain for a long time smouldering beneath the habit of resignation, owing to the all-powerful prestige by which wealth is still surrounded in that nearly desert country.

Those faces, lately so humble, so timid, were beginning to lower; Mrs. Wilson and her daughter, more and more alarmed, drew closer to the Count and Scipio, whilst Beaucadet, putting his hand to his sword, said to his men:

"Be ready for orders."

Then, turning to the riotous boors, whose numbers were closing fast around the Viscount and his father, the officer continued in the most authoritative voice he could command:

"Countrymen, I invite you all in the name of the law, which every one is supposed to be aware of, to disperse, and go to your homes."

The voice of Beaucadet was unheeded: the cries, complaints, and reproaches were poured forth with still greater violence, exasperated to the utmost by the Viscount's provoking attitude; for during this new and growing incident, the youth did not forget his part: well acquainted with his repertory of the opera, he did not forget the masquerade ball in Don Juan, when after his savage attempt upon Zerline, and overwhelmed with taunts, insults, and threats, the master of Leporello lifts up his disdainful brow, and alone against all, defies the rebellious throng.

Just so was it with the Viscount: with head erect, his foot stretched out, an arrogant look, his left hand carelessly thrust into his breeches-pocket, his right mechanically striking his dusty boots with the point of his hunting-whip, he confronted, with rare audacity, the whole crowd of rioters; scorn, disdain, and passion lent to his handsome countenance, usually so effeminate, a character of strange decision; his eyes sparkled with boldness, his cheeks were slightly tinged, and beneath his small fair mustachios, his lips then contracted by a sneer, sent forth in successive puffs—the smoke of his cigar.

At that moment, Raphaela, whose terror was then at its height, directed towards Scipio a long look of sorrow and reproach; alas! never had she thought him so handsome.

Count Duriveau himself, in spite of the private reasons he had to deplore this event, could not help feeling a kind of pride on witnessing the intrepid behaviour of his son. However, as he wished to appease the anger of his tenants, and yielding to that powerful authority of public morals which the most depraved father cannot disallow when speaking to his son before other men, Count Duriveau said to the Viscount in a loud tone:

"This is a serious charge, my son; and therefore in spite of appearances, I hope it is not well founded. Not because I fear more than yourself any vain and futile threats; but because I trust and believe you have given no occasion for their use."

As soon as the Count began to speak, the tumult subsided into a deep silence; all waited for Scipio's reply, a reply which was to allay the general wrath, or kindle it into a still fiercer flame. The desolate supplicating looks of the young maiden, seemed to conjure the Viscount to put an end to this painful scene.

"Answer me, Scipio—answer!" exclaimed the Count.

"I declare," said the Viscount, calmly and playfully moving his eye-glass along the angry crowd, —"I declare that I did at first think it odd that a feeder of turkeys had chosen to use my name to adorn the fruit of her rustic amours, but here, in the presence of these doughty and respectable champions of the turkey-feeder, who all look as drunk as bullies, I am happy to proclaim that the child is mine."

Then, as an explosion of raving cries followed this avowal, Scipio with a glittering eye, quivering lip, and indomitable brow, took two steps in front, folded his arms, and approaching near enough to touch the foremost of the rioters, repeated in a short snappish voice:

"Yes, the child *is* mine!—well, what then?"

The look, the action, the attitude of the youth, disclosed an intrepidity so unexpected, that some of the peasants fell back involuntarily; but this first impulse gave place to a terrible reaction. The fury was now at its height; one of the peasants, he who had brandished the flail, laid his hands on Scipio's shoulders, turned him right about face, and forced him to look upon the cradle, perched upon a piece of rock, and said to him in a menacing voice:

"Wretch! have you the heart to jest in presence of your dead child? Look upon him—if you dare!"

Again, for the second time, Scipio shuddered, not with fear, but emotion; for a moment his eyes fixed on the livid face of the little babe.

"What, you ragamuffin, do you dare to lift your hand to my son?" roared the Count, seizing the peasant by the collar.

"Yes, to him, and to yourself, since you raise your hand to me."

"The father and son are both alike," cried several men.

Already, in spite of the exertions of Beaucadet, the *gensdarme*, and the Count's servants, Scipio and his father were hemmed in and in imminent danger, when all at once the cry of "*Help! murder!*" which, every moment becoming louder and nearer, produced, by the surprise it occasioned, a happy diversion in favour of the Count and his son; both hastily disengaged themselves, whilst their aggressors turned with uneasy curiosity towards the glade.

A man of enormous bulk, almost naked, having nothing to cover him but his shirt and drawers covered with mud, rushed into the middle of the glade, his features distorted by terror, and screaming out:—

"Help! murder! protect me! save me!"

In spite of this man's alarm, his head entirely bald (for Monsieur Dumolard, whom you have already recognised, concealed his polished cranium within a large black wig) his ludicrous rotundity gave him so strange an appearance, that the violent resentment which the Viscount and his father had almost fallen victims to, were changed into a mood of hilarity that was perfectly irresistible.

At the sight of Beaucadet, clad in his uniform, Dumolard must certainly have conceived him to be the incarnation of Justice to protect and avenge, for he embraced the *gendarme* with so much vivacity, that the officer was well-nigh stifled and upset.

"You half-rigged citizen," said Beaucadet struggling to disengage himself from the convulsive grasp of Dumolard, you are immodest—we have women here—retire—cover yourself—and say what you want."

"Save me, *gendarme*, protect me, revenge me!" Dumolard continued to vociferate.

"Miserable *sans-culotte!* I tell you there are women by!"—repeated Beaucadet, "you must be an immoral reprobate to run about the woods in such a costume!"

"He took my coat, my waistcoat, my breeches, even my boots," cried Dumolard in a faltering and broken voice, "he took every thing from me."

"Who?" inquired Beaucadet.

"He forced me to undress by threatening to shoot me; he then put on my clothes, complaining they were too big for him, the monster! and observe, I had fifty-three *louis-d'ors* in my purse, which was in my breeches pocket.—The robber even took away my cap and wig, to disguise himself."

"Who was it?" cried Beaucadet with all his might,—"who was it?"

"At length, taking my horse by the bridle, he led it out of the thick copse in which I had lost myself, and where I had unfortunately met with him, the ruffian! and he started off without my daring to follow him.

"But who—who—who was it?" roared Beaucadet, exasperated beyond all bearing.

"And just now," continued the *sans-culotte*, hurried away by the heat of his narrative, "just now, as I was dragging myself here, I saw him pass by at the end of a long avenue; he was galloping at full speed, and he met two *gensdarme* who saluted him—the simpletons!"

"But you would be a simpleton yourself," cried Beaucadet, "if you did not tell us after all who it was plundered you of your horse, clothes, money, boots, and very wig."

"Who then can it be, but him?"

"But who? Zounds! who?" thundered Beaucadet.

"Your own!"

"How mine?"

"I have told you so this hour, the ruffian you are tracking."

"*Bamboche!!*" cried Beaucadet amazed.

"What!" replied Dumolard indignantly, "is this the way you take my evidence—to call it a *spree*.*

"Why, you enormous *sans-culotte!* that's the name of my robber."

"Call himself by such a name when he follows such a trade!—it's an atrocious mockery," muttered Dumolard.

"Did my *gensdarme* salute him?"

"Oddsbodkins! they took him for a huntsman," continued Dumolard, "the dolts!"

"Bamboche, Bamboche, you are a true blackguard," cried Beaucadet indignantly: "to rifle thus the clothes, the horse, and the wig of this large gentleman,—to let my men bow to you,—a beggar like you, after stealing out of prison,—a great ruffian such as you,—it's disgusting, but you shall pay for it."

"Raphaela! my child! what's the matter?" cried Mrs. Wilson, supporting her daughter, who was fainting in her arms: "my God! she is losing her senses! help!"

At this new fluctuation of events, that attention which was lately engrossed by Monsieur Alcide Dumolard suddenly shifted to a new object; all eyes were directed with surprise and sympathy on Mrs. Wilson and her daughter.

The ridiculous adventure of the bulky *sans-culotte* was not likely to draw forth much pity either from the young lady or her mother. The maiden sunk at last beneath the violence of her contending emotions, which she had long and courageously repressed: her mild and lovely face, by degrees losing its colour, soon became as white as marble; a few burning tears still hung suspended to her closed lids; although her mother, who had not been able to anticipate the shock, still supported her as well as she could, the young girl had sunk upon her knees, her head drooping upon her shoulder. When she fell her hat had rolled off upon the ground, and the admirable chesnut hair of Raphaela came undone, and twisted like a silky net about her; whilst her mother, who had knelt down to support her, folded her in her arms and covered her with tears and kisses.

The formidable anger of the peasants, already turned aside by the grotesque appearance of Dumolard, vanished in a moment in the midst of these new incidents, so different in their character, and they forgot their passionate resentment against Scipio, at the sight of a picture so moving as Mrs. Wilson weeping over her daughter in a fit.

* * * * * *

A quarter of an hour after these events, as the sun was setting in a clear and serene sky, three groups, of very discordant appearance, were issuing from these woods.

In an open carriage, followed by servants holding led horses, lay the lovely Miss Wilson, supported by her mother; whilst the miserable Dumolard, who had borrowed a cloak from one of the *gensdarme*, was shivering on the coach-box, still tremulous and bewildered.

On one side of the coach rode Count Duriveau, with a darkened brow, his mind a prey to the deepest anxiety. Viscount Scipio, faithful to his part, that of a man proof against every feeling, rode beside the opposite door with stoical indifference, though now and then a cloud would pass over his face, or a twinge fold itself upon his eyebrows.

Beaucadet's brigadier marched, on horseback, at the head of the second group, not far from the cross of the crossway. Two countrymen bore on a few branches the cradle of the dead child: the rest of the tenantry followed these, bareheaded, silent, sorrowful, and collected.

The brigadier, by order of Monsieur Beaucadet, accompanied this sad procession, which was transporting the body of the infant to the magistrate's house; the coroner and the physician were in the next place to proceed to the examination of the body.

The last group that left the wood, was Monsieur Beaucadet and his four soldiers. They took their way at a smart trot towards the farm of Grand-Genevre, in order to arrest Bruyare on the charge of child murder.

Immediately after this arrest, Monsieur Beaucadet was to hasten and inform the authorities of the disguise in which Bamboche had succeeded to leave the wood wherein he must needs have been taken, but for his meeting with Monsieur Alcide Dumolard.

Another personage who, invisible himself, had been, notwithstanding, a spectator of the foregoing scenes, was now likewise hastening, but by a different route, towards the farm.

This was no other than Bete-Puante, the poacher.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FARM.

THE sun was about to set when Beaucadet, attended by his *gensdarme*, and bent on effecting the arrest of Bruyere, had taken his way to the farm of Grand-Genevre belonging to Count Duriveau, and dependent on his estate of Tremblay.

It would be difficult to give to any one who has not seen the farms of this part of Sologne even a faint idea of the repulsive aspect of those fetid, crumbling hovels, unwholesome forthe cattle themselves, in which vegetate, however, the farmers, their servants, and their labourers, almost all to a man sickly, wan, and enervated; for there it is that perpetual and dreadful fevers, caused by the noxious vapours rising out of a springy soil, soaked with stagnant waters, exhaust the wretched population, already debilitated by a scanty and loathsome sustenance.

The farm of Grand-Genevre was so called after

* The word Bamboche signifies that sustained tempestuous kind of boisterous fun, which is called in vulgar parlance, a *lark*, a *spree*.

a gigantic juniper tree, two centuries old at least, which grew hard by the farm-house. The whole consisted of a parallelogram of huts worn out, full of crevices, and built with a species of mortar, half earth half sand, which is rendered a little more adhesive, when in a liquid state, by the addition of chopped hay.

The roof, which was broken in many places, was patched up in one place with ragged tiles, worn by time; in another with thatch, half rotten with moisture, and lastly, with tufts of dry furze, piled over the unsound timber-work.

These buildings comprised a barn, a sheep-fold, a stable, an ox-stall, and a dwelling-house, and enclosed a yard three fourths of which was overlaid with a heap of infectious dung, floating in a hollow pool of black, fetid, and stagnant water, fed by the dark ooze emitted from the dung-heap, and the vapour rising from the marshy sod. This bed of nauseous liquid, crusted with a layer of blueish slime, pervaded the yard so extensively near the dwelling of the farmer, that he had been forced to construct a sort of gutter with pebbles, overlaid with faggots of thorny furze, at the extremity of which were two or three steps mossy and disjoined, leading up to the one single chamber of that dwelling.

On the eastern side of the farm, buried in its hurtful flat, stretched far and wide an immense plain of sloughy moorland; on the north grew up a crowd of large oaks; whilst towards the west, a narrow strip of grass was all that served to divide these buildings from a vast morass, covered in winter and in autumn by a thick and incessant fog; and which, in summer, when the heat of the sun caused it to ferment, filled the air with pestiferous miasma.

Night was approaching; it was the time when the cattle return from the fields. Soon after, and weltering through the pool we have described, to reach their stall, came a few lankey, raw-boned cows, with loose hanging dugs, their dull scanty coats matted in several parts with a crust of thick mire; the meagre pasture of the heath, the furze, and the meadows, nearly at times under water, was the cause of this lean condition of the herd; they were driven by a lad of fifteen, who might have passed for ten; his legs were naked, blueish, and chopped by the habit of walking perpetually over a marshy soil.

The only raiment worn by this child, was a pair of trousers in rags, and next to his skin (this forlorn race never know what a shirt is), a frock of coarse brown cloth, steeped with the penetrating night-damp. His yellow hair was as stiff and thick as a mane; his hollow livid cheeks, his white scorbutic lips, his dull eye, his slow trailing steps, plainly told you that he *had* the *fevers*, as they say in that country. As for remedial means, these wretched creatures cannot think of them: the physician lives at a great distance, and his visit would cost too dear; *so they have the fevers*, and keep them, until the fevers wear them out, or are worn out themselves—a very rare case is this last.

A fallow dog, hairy, mud-stained, and miserably lean, helped to drive the herd along; the little cow-boy with difficulty managed to enclose his cattle within a cold muddy cow-house, with a perforated roof, to stop up the crevices of which they had thrown over them a few faggots of fir tree.

It was easy to see that a mutual affection, based on a frequent interchange of services and a perfect parity of existence, united the little herdsman and his dog.

How many long hours of autumn and winter, that poor child had spent, sheltered behind some bush of furze in the midst of the lonely desert moors, straining his dog to his bosom, in order to warm his poor benumbed limbs with that animal heat.

Thus nestling, his mind as vacant as that animal's, the child sometimes watched his feeding herd through thedamp, cold mist which half veiled them from his view, and sometimes would gaze with listless eyes on the slow evolutions of the flights of lapwings and wild ducks; by and by locked in yet more vacant apathy, as still and lifeless as the zoophyte, there did he squat him down for the live-long day, his tiny forehead covered with his hands, whilst his fixed eyes were rivetted on the fixed eyes of his dog.

And this lonesome, animal, brutalising life, which levels man with the beast of the fields, was the daily existence of this wretched child; like many thousands of beings of his own age and condition, devoid of the most elementary instruction, thus he lived in the midst of the desert moors, neither more nor less intellectually than the herd he tended. Ignorant of the meanest notions of good or evil, of right or wrong, the instinct of this child went no further than to unite his own exertions to those of the dog, to prevent the cattle from straying into the copse, or browsing the young seed, and driving them home at night to their litter, which he shared.

And yet a host, a countless multitude of human beings, come into the world, thus to live and thus to die, in utter ignorance, and dullness, partaking of social man in nothing but his aspect, and knowing of humanity but its pains, its misery, all unconscious that the Almighty has endowed them, like others, with so many gifts, bestowing upon them a soul which binds and links them to himself, and a mind which by due culture would raise them up to a level with the best.

The little cow-boy had just driven his herd into the stall, when the farm-girl returned, bringing back two sick horses which she had been watering at the adjacent pond; she sat astride on one of these on his bare back, urging the heavy gait of the beast, by beating his sides with her thick, red, naked legs.

Penury, over-rude labour, and brutishness, by subjecting their victims to one pitiless level, tend so much to destroy the different characters of elevation, force, and grace, which the Creator has impressed upon his creatures, that this girl had retained nothing of her sex but the name.

Her features were coarse, tanned, and burnt by the inclemency of the seasons; her shape bloated and disfigured by labour too great for her bodily strength; her clothes ragged, and polluted with mire; her hair uncombed, and scarcely confined within a filthy white cotton cap, her look was savage and impudent; her motions like a man's—and yet the poor creature was one of that sex whom God had originally endowed with that delicacy of form, those soft motions, that natural elegance, that timid candour, that charm of attractiveness and chastity combined, which characterise the woman, and which education serves but to develope and improve; for each of these precious gifts seems destined to contain the germ or obligation of a virtue or a grace.

Far otherwise, this poor farm-girl, thrown upon the world without education, precept, or care, as her mother had been, and the countless number of her equals, was still more to be pitied than a man in such a state. Cut off from all happiness, from all human joys, she had besides, through toil, fatigue, and misery, lost and forfeited almost the countenance and shape which the Creator had bestowed upon her; and if the prospect of physical degradations in man saddens the soul, the sight of a woman, like her we have described, causes a far more fretful and bitter resentment.

She was shortly after followed by two ploughmen; each got off the horse he was sitting upon. The paltry harness was heedlessly tossed into a corner of the yard, either on the dung, or in the stagnant water the horses, splashed up to the breast, were

fastened in that state at the upper end of the cow-house.

Meanwhile the little cow-boy took out an immense pan made of brown stone, wiped it clumsily with a handful of hay, and went with it to the door of the farm-house. Having walked up some of the loose steps, he set the pan on the landing, and said in a whining voice:

"All our cattle are returned; here's the pan."

Then he sat down on the stone, exhausted with weariness, and shivering with the two-fold effects of cold and fever, he buried his face in his hands and waited.

A little after, through the red glare which flickered through the door, a skinny arm was thrust, provided with a large wooden ladle, and the huge pan was soon nearly filled with a mess of nutriment which deserves to be separately noticed.

The ground of this mixture without a name consisted of sour curds, mixed with buckwheat meal and bits of bread, black, firm, and clammy. Mortar, partially diluted with water, and falling in the mason's trough, does not produce a sound more flat and heavy than was produced by this nauseous aliment, which was to be eaten cold; the farmer and his family not faring a bit better themselves.

The pan having been filled, the little cow-boy lifted it with much pains, and, setting it on his head, returned to the stall.

When he reached it, the farm-girl was pouring into a few brown pots what little new milk she had been able to squeeze out of the udders of the cows; it was to be set apart for churning into butter, and afterwards sold: for they only consumed the residue, or sour curds, at the farm.

When they saw it set aside for sale, that nice warm milk, so wholesome and nutritious, these poor people, resigned to the loathsome food which awaited them at the close of their weary day; these people, formed and broken to misery, experienced no feeling of envy. No, it was with them, as it is with those artisans in tatters, who may be seen, each in his attic, constantly bent over his toil, and looking without any envious desires on those splendid stuffs of silk and gold, which they weave without relaxation, and which shine like the brilliant festivals they are meant to adorn.

When the little cow-boy reached the stable with the pan containing the common pittance on his head, he found his companions there; they were sitting on the dung near the door, taking advantage of the last glimpses of day to light their repast; the only lantern there was used to light the farmer's

hut—any other would have been considered an unnecessary expense.

Just then, a noise of one groaning with acute pain was heard proceeding from the stall.

"Well!" said one of the ploughmen, "there 's old Jemmy at the old tune again."

"Yes; this is the time when little Bruyere usually calls upon him."

"Poor old fellow! it 's wishing him no harm neither, to wish it was all over with him."

"To suffer such racking pains—not to be able to speak; and that for two years. Why, it 's worse than death."

"Yet it 's lucky for him that Master Chervin allows him a litter in the stable, and the rest of our butter-milk. Without him, old Jemmy had died in a ditch like a dog."

"Our master is much to praise for his charity, for ill-luck treads upon his heels," said the dairy girl, whose name was La Robin. "They say that the Count's collector is going to turn Master Chervin out of the farm, because he can't pay his rent."

"What 's that to us?" said one of the labourers rudely. "There 's sure always to be some farmer at the farm. Peter or Nicholas, it 's all one to me. Fit only to die in a ditch! it 's all alike to me, until I grow old and weak like old Jemmy."

"And who would think, now, that old Jemmy had been so strong and clever?" replied the other carter.

"Whilst now it 's all up—not a limb to move."

"It 's the cold damp of the marshes which has bent and twisted him up like the handle of a hedging bill."

"And also, besides that, the night dews of autumn when he served as a shepherd."

"And what less have we to expect ourselves, when we grow old, or perhaps before? We need not joke about it. As for me, the *fevers* never let me alone."

"Why, the same dish is baking for us as for the rest of them," said La Robin, who, poor creature, was not without carelessness, the philosophy of the humble class. "By dint of digging, the spade grows blunt, and when it 's worn out, they chuck it away. Where, then, is the help?"

"No where, surely. It 's fate that does it."

"But yet it 's a very trying fate for poor people," said one of the labourers.

"Oh! that it is—and hard to bear."

"It 's our own," said La Robin. "Fate, you know, is fate after all."

"Oh! as for you, La Robin," resumed the carter, "if you were taken and quartered, you would say, 'never mind—it 's my fault—it could not be helped!'"

"But since it is fate!" rejoined the girl in a tone of deep persuasion; "and this it is that proves it: it 's our fate, and your fate, and yours!"

After this triumphant explanation of his destiny, the carter, baffled in his reply, scratched his ear, and shook his head; he was but half satisfied.

"Stop," resumed La Robin, next appealing to facts to sustain her argument; "I will make it all as clear as your own eye. This evening, I milked my cows, the milk is still warm; this morning, by master's order, I twisted the neck of six fat geese, which are hanging up in the dairy, to be taken to market, with six of Bruyere's turkeys, twenty pounds of butter, half a hundred of eggs, twenty-four bushels of fine wheat, a pike weighing fifteen pounds at least, and two carps, which, together, weigh as much; I found that fine fish this morning, on the lines which Master Chervin had stretched last night in the pond.

"Well! what has that to do with fate?" said the carter, amazed.

"Wait," replied La Robin; "with this wheat could we not make glorious white bread, eh?"

"Oh! yes, yes!"

"With the butter and fresh eggs a fine large pancake?"

"I should think so."

"With the milk, a fine sweet broth?"

"Yes, indeed!"

"With the pike and carps cut into slices, a splendid dish of fry?"

Here the labourers smacked their lips by way of response.

"And the roast goose would be prime eating, I hope?"

"When I was a little boy, I had many geese to keep and look after; but I never tasted any; it must be a grand treat."

"So," returned La Robin with a radiant look, "so, here we have within reach the means of making wheat bread, milk broth, a pancake, roast poultry, and even a fine cake, since we have got flour, eggs, and butter; and is not this wherewithal to make a supper?"

"A true wedding supper!" One must marry to make even one such supper in the course of life. But what has all this to do with fate?"

"It proves what I said," replied La Robin, magisterially, "it proves it; since by the side of all these good things, we are now going to eat our pie of buckwheat and curd."

"Umph!" grunted the carter, looking at his comrade interrogatively; but the other labourer, spent with weariness, was half asleep, heedless of this philosophical argument, whilst the little cow-boy sat with his limbs gathered up and was *shaking with fever*.

La Robin, judging by his looks that the labourer was not yet quite edified, continued:—

"Look you, Simon, if it was our fate to eat these nice things instead of our paste—we should eat them; but since we do not, nor our masters either, it is not our fate."

"But, thunder of heaven!" cried the carter, driven to his wit's end; "whose fate is it then to eat these good things?"

"It 's the fate of the rich in towns and cities, since they buy them and eat them," answered the dairy woman.

"As it is their fate to buy our calves, our sheep, our oxen that we never taste."

"Umph!"

"Is n't it true?" replied La Robin, in triumph; "yes or no? Don't they eat every thing, and we nothing?"

"The truth is they do eat all," said the carter, sullenly, after a moment's reflection, and as if struck with the evident light of her argument; "the truth is they eat all, and we nothing."

"So they have their fate and we ours; only their fate is a good fate, and ours is a bad fate; now then, quick! out with your spoons," added La Robin; "let us eat our paste: that will be so much done, and a good riddance."

Then each drew towards the pan urged by a sharp appetite, modefied by disgust; La Robin, seated between the two carters, seemed to treat them with equal attention; the little cow-boy sat opposite to her.

"It tumbles down cold and heavy into your paunch like flakes of ice or snow," said the carter, slowly sinking his spoon into the pan; I who was cold enough when I came in, am now quite frozen with it."

"It is n't Count Duriveau's hounds, who were just now hunting in the woods, that would put up with this cold paste, I wot," said the second carter.

"True, they are very happy, very well treated, those dogs," replied Simon; "t'other day, when I went to carry some hay to the castle, I looked into the kennel, and saw Mister Latrace, the bugleman mixing their broth. Oh! but there were sheep's heads, and tripe, and bull's heads—quite a wedding broth!"

"But we can't all be hunting dogs, you know," said the dairy woman, resignedly, and without the least idea of being ironical. The observation seemed so natural that it excited no remark.

Then again, the groans in the stable were repeated, and a voice was heard to call on Bruyere with an accent of increasing impatience.

"Hark! old Jemmy is calling Bruyere—the poor man grows uneasy," said La Robin.

"Faith it's strange, here's night coming on, and the little chit is not come in with her turkeys," said one of the carters; "there will always be more than enough left for her."

"True, for she eats like a wren, and she does eat too, because she chooses," said the other, with a strange, dubious kind of look; "if she chose—she need not eat at all."

"I don't say no to that," resumed La Robin, shaking her head, "since she is *charmed;* witness her turkeys that know her, love her, and obey her, and are more obedient than a dog to his master."

"And then her two large turkey-cocks, that are so fierce, would spoil your face if you tried to enter the roost at night, when Bruyere is perched up in the nest she has built above her birds, as fat Sylvain very well knows,—he who wanted to get in last summer, and was well-nigh blinded for his pains."

"And then again, Monsieur Beaucadet, the *gendarme* officer, who wanted to romp with Bruyere, and who was glad to fly before the two turkey-cocks, as fast as he could go."

"Her turkeys must be *charmed* like herself, and I would not eat of them,—if my fate was to eat of them, as La Robin says."

Here several peasants, an old man, a man of middle age, and a woman with a child in her arms, came into the farm-yard and walked towards the servants.

"Good!" said La Robin, "these are surely some new *customers* for Bruyere. But I have never seen them before."

"Is Bruyere at the farm?" inquired one of the new-comers.

"I told you so," muttered La Robin, aside; then she continued, raising her voice:—"You wish to speak to her that she may give you *advice*, do you not, good people?"

"Yes, my good lass—we come from the vale; we have heard about her, and we came away after the day's work."

"The girl ought to be home by this," resumed La Robin; "but you won't have long to wait. If you wish to see her the sooner, go on to the dry rivulet, to the left of the farm; Bruyere is sure to return by the little path."

"Thank you, good lass," said the elder of the two peasants."

Thereupon he and his company withdrew from the farm-yard.

CHAPTER IX.

BRUYERE.

"WELL," said the dairy-woman, as Bruyere's *customers* withdrew, "they still keep coming; now its the people from the Val: by-and-by we shall see them come all the way from *Beauce* for her advice."

"Another proof that she is *charmed*."

"Yes, yes, she must indeed be *charmed*," replied La Robin, "to continue so pretty."

"With her hair so bright!"

"And her garland and flowers!"

"And her strange sashes!"

"Her boots of rushes!"

"And her large green eyes—don't they look bewitched?"

"Then she foretells the weather, the drought, the hail, the rain, or the fog."

"I believe you! A sailor on the Loire would be nothing to her."

"That's why they come here to be advised."

"She understands the land too! Let her but say *her words* to those who apply for them, and the worst lands become good: with her no *soil is sandy!* But you must attend to her advice."

"Witness even this farm; Master Chervin took her advice, and he had a rich harvest."

"Yes: but where's the use to him, his lease was expiring; the collector saw the rich harvest, and raised the rent one third, besides a *wetting*. Master signed the new agreement: every thing went to make it up; and this year as he can't scrape enough together—they turn him out."

"Still the fault is not Bruyere's."

"Oh, no! she's never mistaken. She knows the secret of herbs too, for once she gathered some for old Jemmy, and they did him much good: but the disease gets the better of you at last; it's so obstinate."

"Yes," replied La Robin, "but she has cured many others besides."

"There's nothing but *the fevers* that her words can't clutch hold of."

"She says its the marshes and bogs which give us *the fevers*."

"Ah! ah! the marshes that give us the fevers!" exclaimed one of the carters with a loud laugh. "What a foolish thought is that!"

"Well now, look you," said La Robin, "since she says so I believe her; if she is *charmed* for one thing, so she is for another."

"Why then," said the carter wavering, "it may perhaps be true."

"You have only to use your eyes," replied La Robin, "when any thing has been lost, you have but to tell her in what direction it may be; then off she hies with her turkeys, and obliges them to find it, as happened with the collector's silver snuff-box."

"And the game-keeper's brass powder-horn."

"Yet they say our little Bruyere is not charmed."

"She is though!"

"Without mentioning that her heart is as good as the best of theirs."

"In proof of which, when Bête-Puante, the poacher, was tracked like a wolf, she watched over him, and always warned him betimes."

So seeing they could not pounce upon him, they let him alone.

"A brave man, too, that Bête-Puante; they say that though he does poach, its merely to send a piece of good game, or fresh fish to some poor sick devil in want of a bit of wholesome food."

"They say so, and very likely too; little Bruyere would not like him so much, if he was not a good man."

"They have often been seen together of late."

"She has surely *charmed* the poacher like the rest, the little *charmer*."

"O yes, she is a charmer and charmed herself, for," said the poor repulsive La Robin naturally, "only look at her alongside of me, with her pretty feet, her pretty legs, her pretty hands, her pretty shape, although she is sixteen; alongside of me she looks like a reed, surely then she must be *charmed*."

"And if she was not, why, instead of lying down pêle-mêle with us in the stall, has she required, even when quite little, to be perched up in the roost with the turkeys?"

"That's what ruffles you, my lad; you would have liked also to romp with her, you would!" said La Robin, laughing vociferously, and dealing her right-hand neighbour a smart punch in the ribs; he, to keep up the joke, leant over La Robin, and gave a heavy cuff to the other carter, who was snoring,—the second carter, taking his cue, retorted by giving a great kick to the cow-boy: the child

who still kept shaking, endeavoured to smile, and did not return it.

"It is not you, La Robin, who would have done what Bruyere did," resumed the carter, and again he laughed; "you are not such a fool to leave our stall at night."

And Simon gave the repulsive creature a loud kiss, repeating:

"You are not such a fool as to leave our stall at night."

"No, no, she is not such a fool," added the carter on the left, in his turn embracing with the same familiarity, and abundantly, La Robin, without appearing to excite the least jealousy in Simon, whilst the little cow-boy saw without heeding, and heard without care the coarse and vulgar jests which he witnessed; for we must not undertake to report the naturally cynical conversation which followed up the resounding kisses given to the dairy-woman by the two carters, and which unearthly conversation was prolonged till night had set in.

Then the remainder of the curds and buckwheat was put outside the stall by the little cow-boy, on a trough which he covered with a pail: this was Bruyere's supper; her delay had begun to surprise the farm people, but did not make them uneasy. How could they feel any uneasiness for a creature that was *charmed?*

The doors of the stall being shut, the two carters, the dairy-woman, and the little cow-boy, lay down together in a heap on the same litter, clothed as they were, and pressing against each other to be warm, one taking up a piece of blanket, to lay over him, another a wretched cart-cloth; for beds, sheets, and blankets are things almost always unknown to the agricultural race.

As for those obscure incidents which the night only hides beneath its shades, who can wonder at them? Those long winter nights, passed in this manner in a lonely farm—or again, during the hot summer nights, when harvest time fills the barns with reapers of both sexes, when women, men, girls, and boys, lie together undistinguished upon the same straw, what right have we to wonder at the consequences?

Here are human beings abandoned to themselves, brought up with no more care or solicitude than the beasts of the field, shut up in the same fold without distinction of age or sex, like cattle returning from the plough or the grass, what right have we to ask them for better morals than those of the beasts? what right have we to require of them to curb their brutal passions, to respect childhood, and to have a sense of their own dignity.

And how many of these miserable creatures, given up to themselves and the fatal tradition of this wild and wretched life, shorn at their birth of whatever tends to improve the mind, purify the heart, and elevate the soul, live as they can, and by compulsion, in the mire in which they stagnate.

"But," cries the optimist,—this brutified race takes and bears their miserable lot, without murmuring: they often roll and gambol in their filth with joy and coarse delight; look at those country thralls: they are satisfied with this unwholesome and nauseous food, although they do day by day gather in, grow, fatten, and prepare without envy the elements of the most salutary, nutritious, and palatable food. Where is the use in suggesting to those hinds any wants or appetites which they do not know? Look at them; hardly have they satisfied their hunger, men, women, and children, before they fling themselves down upon the same litter. What matters the fact of savage promiscuousness which occurs so often in these haunts! Night is convenient—its darkness hides all that should be hid. This race has lived in this manner since ages; they are patient, used to toil, they ask for nothing, they are resigned, they work, they endure without complaint; *do not you be more of a partisan to them than they are to themselves.* These people whom you call unhappy, laugh, and sing, and make love after their fashion. Do not hope to make their lot a subject of pity."

To this we reply.

"It is precisely because this disinherited race are frequently without the sense and consciousness of the coarse, the savage, and the brutifying nature of that animal existence in which they are forced to live, that in the name of human dignity and human brotherhood, we ask for them an education which shall impart to them a sense, a consciousness, and a distaste for an existence so deplorable.

Let it be an education which, whilst it gives them the measure of THEIR STRENGTH, the knowledge of THEIR RIGHTS, the obedience of THEIR DUTIES, shall likewise permit this disinterested class to apply for and obtain a due portion of the substance and the fruits which they concur to make thrifty, a portion which shall be honestly allotted to them according to the fatigue, the labour, and the understanding of the labourer.

"But"—will the same optimist say again, "why do you mention to us those damp unwholesome dens, those lone and barren moorlands, those pestiferous marshes and bogs? Here, for instance, is the farm of Grand-Genévre—well! all that can be said of it is this—it 's delightful! Cabat or Dupré would make a most interesting picture of it."

And, truly it may be owned that in the spring the barren heath is tipped with rosy flowers, on the miry edge of the marshes you see the forky leaves of the iris, with its golden blossom, or the stalks of the tall reeds with their brown tufted heads; the reviving moss covers with its velvet down and emerald tints the tiles and the thatch of the half broken roofs; the crevices of the crumbling hovels are hidden by the pellitory plants, among which is seen to twine the graceful thyrsus of the rope-weed with its white and blue bells. In fine, the few large oaks which shelter the farm on the north are adorned with luxuriant foliage.

Then, at the sight of these hovels reflected by the stagnant water of the marsh, and buried in the midst of rosy heath, the flowery iris, and the large verdant trees, the optimist exclaims:

"Look at the landscape! how picturesque!" and shrugs his shoulders with pity if you only speak to him of the horrid condition of people condemned to live in a place, which, according to the optimist, *would make so fine a picture.*

And yet, if this optimist who is fond of fine *colouring* and landscape, were to prolong his stay awhile in this place so *picturesque*, he would soon perceive that the heat of the sun, by fermenting the heaps of dank dung which fill up the yard, exhales a nutritious odour which infects the dwelling-house, already incommoded for want of air; whilst the mire of the marsh, heated by the dog-days, scatters deleterious miasma, no less fatal than the thick fogs with which it is covered in autumn and winter.

Yes, for either you do not know or you forget that if—thanks to the exhaustless prodigality of nature—these poor habitations of the agricultural labourers are for a short season adorned on the outside with an humble rustic dress, the inside of these hovels and the condition of their inmates present at all times one of the most painful pictures which can sadden the human heart.

And we say again, advisedly, that the fate, the health, the life of millions of God's creatures should not depend on the good or the ill will, on the good or bad disposition of one particular man, on the plea that he is the occupant of so much land.

Thus—Count Duriveau, and, after him, his son, is the owner of two or three leagues in land. By the neglect, by the ignorance, by the selfishness, or by the avarice of this man, in a word, by his own fault, this piece of land, on which a host of laborious families reside, is given up to the murderous influ-

ence of stagnant waters, which if drained off, and employed by large works of cleansing, might render that very soil fruitful and productive, they now smite with barrenness, and render mortal to those who cultivate it so laboriously. Count Duriveau, not satisfied with perpetuating this pestiferous foens, compels his farm tenants to live in horrible abodes which he builds them with mud and thatch, in the most unwholesome spots upon his estate—damp and gloomy dens where these wretched thralls and serfs of the field necessarily become feverish and bed-ridden, until decimated by a premature disease.

Is there any authority, any law whatever, to hinder this man from making destructive and deadly what should be wholesome; and sterile what should be fecund? No; this man has at his disposal a portion of the soil of France.

And yet, behold the strange anomaly. When it happens in any of our towns, that a house partially blind or shaky, encroaches by a single foot upon a spacious street from twenty to thirty feet wide, suddenly the law is provoked, and cries out against the injury to the *public benefit*, it assails the proprietor. Willingly or unwillingly he is obliged to pull down his house. Did it not shock the sight? Did it not impede the circulation? Is it not right to preserve a straight and even line? to widen the pavement?

Thus, by the legal authority of the *highway*, the imprescriptible rights of property are thrown down and trampled under foot, and the landlord is obliged without delay to demolish his house, his ancestral abode, the roof under which he closed his mother's eyes.

This subjection of private interest to the public benefit certainly is based on a principle in itself most admirable, and which is expressed in these words: the *public benefit!* But wherefore limit to the sole improvement of towns the large consequences of this magnificent principle of paternity? Why is it that society, so radically and justly invasive of *individual property*—when it injures the common interest—why is it that society remains indifferent, and refuses to act, when, instead of the paltry question of preserving the rectitude of a street, the matter is to fertilise and enrich the land, and to protect the lives—yes, the lives of the great majority of our countrymen?

In the name of outraged humanity, in the name of outraged divinity—for it is a sacrilege to make so unjust a use of what God has created for the satisfaction of all his creatures. Should not society be as rigid towards Monsieur Duriveau, the wealthy proprietor, as towards him whose house encroached upon the street, and exclaim:

"In the name of the *public good*, make your land wholesome, build houses fit for human abode, instead of dens only fit for wild beasts; build them for those industrious men who alone cultivate them and make them productive; snatch these unfortunates, who, after all, are your brothers and fellow-christians, from diseases which enervate them, and kill them! for whom you are responsible in the eyes of God and mankind, since you have it in your power to destroy the cause of this mortality! If you do not, society will alienate your property; as in the case of a landlord who refuses to preserve the uniform rectitude, or to rebuild a house falling to pieces and threatening the lives and limbs of the public."

In vain Count Duriveau might plead:—

"I have no funds to clear and dry my estate, to build healthy dwellings instead of huts of mud and straw."

Should not society reply:—

"The cleansing of a part of the common land, its fertilisation, the health and lives of fifty families, must not be made to depend on the fluctuations of your cash-box, or the paucity of your resources or hardness of heart. ARE YOU TOO POOR TO BE RICH? Then sell your land. Society will oblige the purchaser to give those guarantees which you cannot give. If a purchaser fails to come forward, the country will buy it; the land always repays two fold the advances made upon it, provided we can wait for its produce. When once the country has become the proprietor she will cleanse the soil and build good healthy dwellings for the interest of all and for her own sake: for she will enrol the agricultural labourers into a society and make them shareholders."

Then the common weal will have taken the place of a selfish and sterile individual right; then those moorlands, which were lately marshy, unpopulous, and almost barren, in which a sickly and wretched population is now striving to live, would be transformed into a smiling and productive country, peopled with a happy race, enjoying, by right of labour and intelligence, those gifts of his bounty which God has created alike for all men.

And, praised be the Almighty God, such is the force of things, that those times are coming on—they are at hand. Let men whose lot it is to rule over others so contrive that this emancipation of the forlorn and disinherited classes may be effected, *as a great minister has lately shown to be possible in another country which France will do well to imitate*—without shock, without violence, without any victims, and in a manner congenial with every interest.

The servants belonging to the farm of Grand-Genévre had just closed the door of the ox-stall when Bruyere came into the farm-yard.

CHAPTER X.

BRUYERE.

A SHORT distance from the farm, Bruyere had just met the people who went to her to be *advised*, as La Robin had expressed it; but wishing in the first place to discharge her duty, the young girl had entreated her rustic *clients* to wait for her a few minutes outside.

When Bruyere entered the farm-yard, the twilight sky, darkened to a shady azure at its zenith wherein a few stars sparkled already, still showed in the west that luminous transparency, the last reflection of the setting sun, which sheds so melancholy a charm over the fine autumnal evenings; on this faint purple back-ground the face of Bruyere was drawn: very short of stature, but perfectly proportioned, she had on a short sleeve frock, made of course white wool with wide brown stripes, fastened round the waist by a flexible girdle of rushes as fine as silk, most skilfully woven by Bruyere.

Thanks to its fulness and the thickness of its tissue, the young girl's dress, rising up to her neck and falling down to the middle of her leg, was divided into many folds of simple gracefulness, its want of length prevented its being soiled by the mire of the marshes; its wide sleeves, only reaching to her elbow, displayed her rounded arms slightly tanned by exposure to the sun: her tiny feet protected by small wooden shoes hollowed out of the birch-tree and blackened at the fire, to which the water of a limpid streamlet, wherein the young girl had recently taken her evening bath, had imparted an ebon lustre. Her poverty not admitting the use of stockings, Bruyere, with the industrial skill of the savage, had employed the rushes a second time to make herself a kind of buskin, which, rising below the knee, reached downwards to the instep, joined the *sabot* or wooden shoes; nothing could be more pretty or neater than this pliant, glossy tissue, tightly fitting the round contour of a charming leg, thus preserved from the redness and the chaps almost constantly resulting from contact with mud.

Owing to a singular habit, in spite of the cold, and the rain, and the heat of the dog-days, the young girl never wore any thing to cover her head; only at times, when the heath was in blossom, she would twine a few of its flexible branches in her hair, no doubt to celebrate the name they had given her, when they first found her in her infancy, exposed on the moor, and laid in the midst of a tuft of rosy heath.* (Since that time the mystery of her birth had not been cleared away.) Her chesnut hair, which was very long, falling into detached and natural ringlets, was of so delicate a hue that it melted in the feeble shadow thrown over her brow by the thickness of her hair, in which quivered a few sprigs of rosy heath. Her fine dark eye-brows, were brown like the long curly lashes of her eyelids; her large eyes were of an unusual colour: *sea-green;* according to the passing expression, they sometimes became clear, brilliant like the emerald; at other times of a dark limpid green, like the colour of the waves, yet always transparent in spite of their depth. This singular and mutable colour lent a strange wildness to the look of Bruyere, a look already singularly pensive, and often extremely moveable and brilliant.

Her features were likewise remarkable for their precise adjustment,—for a wonderful harmony pervaded the whole person of this lovely little creature. Her rare beauty, rendered singular by her eccentric attire, her wild graces, her incredible handiness in a thousand trifles she invented; her understanding, singularly quick and penetrating on divers points, the surprising and tender obedience of the birds she had charge of, the kind of divination or to speak more properly, the all but infallible foresight she appeared to be gifted with in rural matters; all these innocent but eccentric qualifications made her appear in the eyes of the simple-minded inhabitants of that desert country a creature that was *charmed*,—that is to say, under the influence of a *fate* cast upon her at her birth; but quite contrary to the usual effects of superstitious habits, far from inspiring either fear or aversion, Bruyere inspired, on the contrary, sentiments of lively gratitude and sincere sympathy; for the influence, though partly supernatural, which they conceived her to possess, never showed itself except to do kind offices; the poor little turkey-feeder found means, in her low degree, to be *serviceable to many* and *agreeable to all.*

As soon as she entered the farm-yard, Bruyere was neither followed nor preceded, but surrounded by her numerous flock, with their shining black feathers, and scarlet heads. Two very large turkey-cocks, proudly rearing up their crest and crop of radiant purple hue, mingled with a bright blue azure bridled up in a formidable manner, turning the wheel, as they call it, sticking out their feathers, and rounding their tails, like a magnificent fan of ebony glazed with dark shady green. Both of them constantly attended—the one on the right, the other on the left—their young mistress: now looking up to her with their red and haughty eye, and then clucking in a voice so triumphant, so insolent, so provoking, that they seemed to defy every one, man or beast, to approach their conductress, in spite of them.

At the sight of these two monstrous birds, three feet in height, and five feet spread out with their powerful wings, their sharp beaks, their pointed spurs, it was no wonder that Monsieur Beaucadet, notwithstanding his valour, had been somewhat puzzled in defending himself with his scabbard against so fierce assailants.

On a signal from Bruyere, all these fowls stood still, clucking joyously before the door of a roost, the narrow wicket of which the young girl opened that she might count her flock: they all passed before her one after another, taking rank according to their size: the youngest came first, without hurry, and in admirable order, whilst the two turkey-cocks, whose age and attachment had procured certain privileges for them, stood up majestically to watch their companions as they defiled, and hastening a few of the loiterers by smart peckings with their beaks, most equitably distributed.

When the whole number had re-entered the roost, all but the two chiefs, Bruyere opened the door. Although at that moment the young girl's countenance was marked with deep melancholy, a soft smile of satisfaction beamed upon her lips as she witnessed the truly surprising order which pervaded the shed: the feathered tribe was already symmetrically sorted in stages as to size; the smallest, entering first, went according to the custom taught them by Bruyere, and perched themselves upon the highest of the three rude perching sticks, rising up in a retreating form, one above another. The natural observation and sagacity of the young girl divining the singular aptitude with which all animals are endowed, she had, in her own humble sphere, and by dint of patience and kindness, accomplished wonders.

At the very top of the shed, and above the rest, was—so to speak—the *nest* of the young girl.

When yet quite a child, Bruyere, through a secret feeling of native modesty and self-respect, one of the most striking features in her character, had felt an invincible aversion to share the common litter on which, in this farm as in every other, the servants of the farm, of both sexes, lay confusedly at the back of some stable or stall. So Bruyere had been permitted by the farmer to build herself, above the roost, and close to the timber work, a kind of swallow's nest, a little nook which she used to reach by climbing the steps of the roost as nimbly and easily as a cat. The child enjoyed at least in this kind of nest, furnished with moss and fine dry fern, mingled with sweet fragrant herbs, a healthy couch and the isolation required by her sex and age. Shortly after, too, she found that she possessed in her flock some vigilant defenders; for Beaucadet's burlesque adventure was not the only one of the kind which had happened to her. The year before, a ploughboy, urged by his bold and brutal desires, having attempted one night to enter Bruyere's retreat, the feathered tribe began to cluck so loudly, and fell from every part of the roost with so much fierceness on the audacious suitor, that he took to flight, stunned by the noise, and frightened by the assault.

Every night, after her last duty was performed, Bruyere would shut the door of the roost, and set down carefully in a corner a small basket covered with fresh leaves which she carried in her hand, and then issue forth to *give audience* to the visitors who came to consult her; these visitors or clients used to wait outside the farm-yard, seated on the trunk of a tree lying on the ground, not far from the enormous juniper tree from which the farm took its name.

Let not the reader be astonished to hear the humble turkey-feeder speak, during the following interview, in a style of language denoting a degree of education, and a rare loftiness of mind, and disclosing a variety of knowledge singularly applicable to rural subjects; the most penetrating mind, the most happy parts never could have endowed so young a child with that practical skill which nothing ever can bestow, save the long experience of labour in the field, and the constant study of the laws and the phenomena of nature; for the intelligent observation of the past serves us almost always to unravel and predict the future.

There could be no doubt, therefore, that Bruyere had appropriated with admirable tact the instruction and the fruits of an experience not her own.

Thus we explain these things which might appear too extraordinary in Bruyere's knowledge, in the

* *Bruyere* signifies heath.

certainty of her prophetic assurances, in the simple wisdom of her advices. As for the plain and artless people who made Bruyere their oracle, they could not help seeing in her, as they did, a being rather supernatural, or *charmed*, as they expressed it.

Two men, one of them middle-aged, the other old and hoary, a woman who was still young, and who held in her arms a child between five and six years old, such were the new-comers or clients of Bruyere, all of them most pitifully clad.

"What do you want with me, dear madam?" inquired Bruyere, in a soft tender voice, of the woman with the child in her lap.

At this question the old man and the man of middle age went a few paces aside from their companion from a praiseworthy sentiment of discretion.

"Alas! God help me, my dear girl," answered the woman, sadly, "I come from Saint Aubin; they say in the vale that you can utter words against sickness, and I have come to ask you to do so for this poor little babe of mine."

So saying, she showed her child wrapt in ragged clothes; he was pale and frightfully lean; his bloated eyes were oppressed with a heavy sense of invincible sleepiness.

Bruyere shook her head in sorrow.

"You have been deceived, my dear lady. I do not know of any words to cure children's complaints."

"Yet they do say in the vale, that last spring you spoke against the distemper of a whole sheepfold of young lambs, and that almost all of them grew well. Do for this sick little child what you did for the young lambs, my good little girl," said the poor simple woman in an imploring voice. "I will now tell you how it came about. This little thing has always been, as you see, much smaller than the two elder ones; but still he could drag himself along. The winter, you know, was very hard. In autumn, my poor good man had caught *the fevers* whilst pulling up stalks out of a ground then under water; these fevers have lodged in his arms and legs; he is a journeyman; yet he rubbed on as well as he could. But our meal-tub was constantly empty; and without some baskets of potatoes that a kind neighbour gave us, we must have starved; and then the last storm in February blew off most of the thatch on our roof; it hardly held together; my poor good man came into the woods of this vale to cut some furze to patch the roof a little, and some dry wood to warm us; but the Count's keepers forbid my good man from pulling up any thing. Why, then, it of course rained as much inside our cot as outside of it; and at night above all, how cold it was—like ice; since then my poor child has been coughing and shaking, until at last he is broken to what you see him," said the woman, bursting into tears. "Ah! my good, dear girl, my only hope now is in you—you can do what you like. It 's nothing at all, but a few words to repeat. Save him from his sickness, I beg you as you saved the young lambs."

Several times, during this sad and artless consultation, Bruyere had been on the point of interrupting the poor woman; but her courage failed her; so after looking attentively at the child, and taking its two small hands into her own, she said to the mother sighing as she spoke:

"You know as for the young lambs they wanted neither the milk of their dam to feed them, nor her fleece to keep them warm; their sole complaint was being shut up night and day in a narrow fold, without sufficient air, and filled with dung, where they could not breathe freely, and where many of them died. I said to the farmer: 'Let your lambs in spring have plenty of fresh air and grass, and exposure to the sun—at night, let the stall be clean and open; thus the lambs will breathe pure and wholesome air; beneath their dam they will never be cold; the little does of the forest are born, grow up and strenghten, and have no other shelter than the bosom of the dam and the low branches of the oaks where she brought them forth.' But the children of the poor," added Bruyere, her eyes filling with tears, "are more to be pitied than the young lambs or the does of the forest: their mother cannot warm them on her frozen bosom, and when her milk does not flow, they cannot find their sustenance either on the plain or in the wood. Your child has suffered the effects of hunger and cold—poor dear mother; thence comes his sickness, and against that ill, alas! my *words* can do nothing.'"

"So then he must die, my dear girl, since your words can do nothing for him!" said the mother, sobbing.

"Has a physician examined the boy?"

"None ever comes to our village; it is too far off. Besides, how could we ever pay for one,—or his medicine? It is not such poor people as we who can send for the doctor."

Bruyere without speaking looked at the child with tender concern; her heart grieved at the thought of dismissing that poor mother without a single word of cheering hope.

"And yet—it would require so little to save him!" resumed she, stooping pensively over him: "a warm raiment—a dry bed, and every day some fresh milk, lukewarm and unmixed."

"Good even, little Bruyere," said one in a loud jovial voice.

The young girl raised her head, and saw, coming towards her, with his arms stretched out, and his face animated with joy, a tall, dark, thin man, wearing a large round hat, a white smock and gaiters.

"God protect and keep you," added he approaching her,—"and may he long preserve you for good people's sake, for I can't help thinking you a little related to the angels above; when you choose it, every misfortune flies before you."

"What 's the news now, Master Chouart?" inquired Bruyere.

"What 's the news! eh?—why this:—my crop is stowed in the barn, my wheat thrashed—I expected twelve hundred bushels of corn, which was a fine thing already, but I have got fifteen hundred—all owing to your *charms*."

Bruyere reflected a moment, and then replied eagerly to the man with the large hat.

"Then you are satisfied with your crop, Master Chouart?"

"Satisfied, indeed! I should think I am. At every bushel I measured out, I kept saying: '*Thanks, little Bruyere—thanks for your charms.*'"

Bruyere interrupted him.

"Since you are satisfied, Master Chouart, you must make me so too—"

"That 's what I came here for; and as they say that you always refuse to take money for your words I—"

Here she interrupted him again, by pointing out the poor woman whose imploring look seemed to say to Bruyere: "You who can do so much—why won't you save my child?"

"You see a worthy woman from the vale—her little child is very ill, and I am sure he might be saved, if he had but a warm little bed, a good raiment, and a little new milk every day for a month or two. Well! I entreat of you Master Chouart, let his mother have a handful of wool from your last shearing, in a small cloth sack—so much for the mattress: your housewife will easily find a spare dimity petticoat, out of which two can be made for the child: so much for the raiment. Finally, you will put by every day a quart of milk for this poor child, which his mother will call for. Do this, Master Chouart," added Bruyere in a soft soothing tone, "do this, and I shall be your debtor."

"Yes, surely—I will do this for the good woman," cried the man in the large hat, "and will do it

gladly—but what can I do for you, little Bruyere? what for yourself?"

"One day I will send and tell you what I desire—by some other poor woman," said Bruyere, with a melancholy smile.

"Oh! I understand," said Master Chouart, slily; "you—that means other people—ah! they are quite right, little Bruyere! you are *charmed*."

"Ah! my dear girl," said the mother, taking the young girl's hand, and gratefully kissing it two or three times, "how right I was to come to you! my child is half saved from this moment. But," added she, bashfully and hesitating, "that is not all: if you would only speak a few words against his illness—my child would be quite saved then."

Bruyere thought, very sensibly, that her advice would have double weight, and would be sure to be more rigidly attended to if they were accompanied by some mystic forms; so, appearing to reflect on the woman's request, the young girl slowly undid one of the sprigs of heath which adorned her brown hair, and drew it to her purple lips, muttering a few words to herself; then, in a solemn manner which formed a strange contrast with her small figure and child-like face, she presented the sprig of rosy heath to the poor woman, saying:—

"Take this branch of heath."

"Thank you, my dear girl," said the poor woman, receiving it with a kind of superstitious awe.

"As soon as you shall have the mattress which Master Chouart has promised you for your child, you must cut this little twig into seven pieces, neither more nor less, mind."

"Seven pieces?" repeated the woman, listening to the young girl with deep attention.

"But, before you divide it, you must wait till the sun sets," added the little sybil, putting her forefinger to her mouth to give more weight to the recommendation.

"Oh! certainly, I will wait till the sun sets," answered the mother.

"Then," continued the sorceress, "you will lay the seven pieces of heath in the wool of the mattress, after which you must sew it up."

"And in what part of the mattress, my dear girl, must I put them?"

"Three pieces at one end, and four at the other."

"Three pieces at one end, and four at the other," repeated the woman, with the same reverence.

"Only you will take care to put a little more wool on the side with the four pieces, and on that side you must lay the head of your child."

"I will remember it all, my dear."

"But mind well," added Bruyere, seriously, "in order that the pieces of twig may preserve the influence of *the words*, you must not neglect, once a fortnight, to slit open the mattress, and wash the cloth, at sunrise."

"Good! my dear girl, good!"

"And after that lay the wool in the open air for seven hours."

"Once a fortnight—for seven hours—yes, my dear girl, I will remember."

"And in another month you must return to see me," added Bruyere, majestically.

"Oh! I will come—that I will—to tell you that you have saved my child," answered the woman, pressing her child to her bosom with a transport of hopeful reliance.

This interview seemed to impress Master Chouart with the deepest admiration, mixed with a little harmless jealousy, for the excellent advices he had received from Bruyere had not been connected with these five magic formulæ; he was no doubt preparing to express his regret, when the other two clients, the old man and the man of middle age, came forward in their turn.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ADVICES.

THE elder of the two new clients wore a dejected look. His son, a man about forty, who accompanied him, likewise seemed full of care. The poor woman left them both with Bruyere, and fell back a little, as did Master Chouart, the fortunate farmer, who had gained so fine a crop—thanks to the advices of the young girl.

"What can I do for you, good father?" said she to the old man, in her soft gentle voice.

"My dear little saint," cried the old peasant, "I am come to tell you that I entreat you to say *some words* against our land, on the other side of the vale. It is quite tiresome, after all——ever since ten years back, when I inherited from an uncle of mine, the harvest has kept diminishing, most pitifully; one would think that each year makes the next worse. The latter were bad enough, in all conscience, but last year and this are still more ungrateful. Out of twenty acres of wheat,—what have I gathered? Hardly six hundred bushels. What a harvest!—the ears not half full—and so small, too! I might say at once that the produce is but what I sowed—grain for grain. Oh! cursed be thou, ungrateful land!" cried the old man, stamping with rage.

"Father is quite right," said the son: "every thing turns from bad to worse. Cursed be the earth so ungrateful to the tiller! Cursed be the earth so malicious and obstinate!"

On hearing these imprecations against the *ill-will* of the land, Bruyere's charming countenance suddenly assumed an expression of sorrow and affliction, as if she had heard a dear and cherished friend unjustly rebuked. Addressing the old man with an accent of mild reproof mingled with a degree of exaltation, which imparted a character of high distinction to her beauty:

"Oh! respect, love, and bless the earth! a generous, an indefatigable parent; for one seed does she not return you ten ears of corn? for one acorn a forest of oaks? Always open to you, her bosom is ready to prove fecund and give forth, from the grain carried by the wind, from the kernel of the fruit which falls out of the beak of a bird, up to the seed you sow in your furrows. No, no, the earth is never ungrateful; if, in the end it grows poor, and exhausted, poor nurse! it is because like a prodigal mother, she gives more than she can afford, because you never leave her either respite or truce. Oh! earth! blest and hallowed earth! when wilt thou, obedient to the Almighty will, cover thyself all over with wood, with harvests, and with flowers? when shalt thou behold all thy laborious children living in abundance and joy?"

There is no describing the attitude, the countenance of Bruyere as she uttered these words; her large sea-green eyes, lifted up to heaven, shone as brilliantly as the stars, which were beginning to shine themselves. The last rosy tints of the twilight cast their mystic reflections on the ravishing form of the young girl, radiant as it was with faith and hope in the fatherly goodness of the Creator.

But after giving way for a moment to this involuntary influence, she felt that it was necessary to substitute facts for words: so after a short silence, turning to the old man, she said:

"No, no, I tell you, good father, the earth never refuses her gifts, unless she have given too long and too much."

"Too much!" cried the old man, with bitterness and wrath, "too much! the wretch! What have I asked her for, these ten years? Good and bad years, her crop of corn. If ever she was prodigal, it was only the first year; but after that, from year to year, she has been more and more niggard. Therefore it is, I come to ask you, dear little saint, to give me words against this cursed miser—so that

the evil may turn to good; for you are my last and only hope."

"Listen to me, good father," replied Bruyere, soothingly, "after a whole day's labour without rest, what do you require to recruit your exhausted strength? Food and rest, do n't you?"

"That at least, dear little saint."

"Yes, that at least, and fairly too, good father; but this poor earth that you curse, did you give it, after such crop, food and rest—that is to say, winter rest and manure?"

"Manure? a little of that; but winter rest—none whatever; that would wind me up completely," cried the old man; "however little she does give, the wretch! at least she yields something—that little is better than nothing."

"Yes, good father, a little is better than nothing; but much is better still. And she would give you much,—generous mother!—if you let her have sufficient rest and nourishment; nay, not absolute rest neither, for so bountiful is she that change of culture is all the rest she asks."

"How so, dear little saint?" said the old man, more surprised.

"Since ten years, you have only allowed your land a *very little* food, and yet you require corn, corn, and still for ever corn—nothing but corn. How could it be otherwise? by degrees it has been exhausted, and can yield no more."

The old man and his son looked at each other, astonished and in doubt; they belonged to that class of cultivators who blindly pursue the old ignorant routine of custom; who seldom manure, and then scantily; and who have no idea of alternate and diversified culture; the operation of which has so much power over production.

"Instead of drying up the earth by constantly growing the same seed," resumed the girl, "follow my advice, good father, and you shall soon fill your barn first and your purse after."

"Alas! dear little saint, do what you think right, you who can do every thing."

"You have, I believe, forty acres of land? in these forty acres, some are good, others not so good, and some are bad ones?"

"Yes, I have eight acres which, little as they yield, produce by themselves as much as the other thirty-eight," replied the old man.

"Well, suppose you bestow on those eight acres all the food, however little it be, that you are used to bestow on the forty acres?"

"Oh! they would then be manured—like garden land."

"And then, good father, in one year, those eight acres, whilst they cost you less money, and less toil,

would produce you four times as much as the forty acres now do; especially if, after having grown wheat at one time, you were to grow potatoes next year, then rice, then clover, and then wheat again; thus proceeding from one culture to another alternately—for you see, good father, what exhausts the land is not continual production: the land is ever ready to give something; but to produce for ever the same thing without change that it is which dries up its sap: you make use of one of your resources only, whilst it possesses a thousand. Now, credit me, your barn will be filled to overflow at all times with eight acres well cultivated; and on the contrary, it will be nearly empty with forty if cultivated but poorly."

"But my other thirty acres?" said the old man, thoughtfully.

"Put those that are less unproductive in sainfoin; you may then feed your cattle on them—the cattle will give you manure, without which you cannot raise corn."

"But then what to do with my worst land?"

"Plant firs—that tree, in our poor Sologne, is the most blest of all trees; with its wood we build houses, with its leaves we heat the oven; its fruit makes the fire blaze on the hearth, its sap turns into rosin; the worst land of all will suit this tree; it thrives without trouble or care, and in six years' time it already yields a profit."

These simple but prudent advices, based as they were on study and experience as to the different properties of land, were too clear, too reasonable, and above all too practical, not to strike the mind of the old man most powerfully; but *custom*, the terrible fatality of agricultural manners, struggled violently with the old man's instinctive good sense, which told him to submit to Bruyere's advices. She perceived this state of mind, and guessing the cause of his hesitation, she called Master Chouart to her and said to him:—

"Master Chouart, last year what advice did I give you?"

"Ah, dear girl!" cried the farmer; "a *charmed* advice! that is the truth of it. I used to till, and till badly, a great deal of ground, at a sad cost. You said to me: 'Till a little and till it well.' This year I have spent twice as little, and my crop is four times what it used to be; but this is the most wonderful: I had no manure—and you know it is the *bread of the land*—so I wanted manure. I had nothing to buy it with; for it would have cost me seventy francs an acre. But what did you tell me with that pretty mouth of yours? 'In August, sow a piece of ground with buckwheat, Master Chouart, it will spring up in October; then cover it over with earth, stalks, leaves, blossom and all; there can be no better or cheaper manure; then lay your seed in this new and well-fed soil, and you'll see the crop it will yield by and by!' I took your advice, I buried my buckwheat: it cost me next to nothing; I then sowed my seed, and in the spring, lo! my wheat was as thick as grass. I have just got my corn in and thrashed it—I have upwards of a hundred and fifty bushels to an acre. I tell you it is better than in Beauce!"

"A hundred and twenty bushels to an acre!" cried the old man, with some doubt and more admiration.

At that moment, Bruyere perceived the little cow-boy hastening towards her from the farm.

"Old Jemmy calls you — most woefully," said the lad; "we can't sleep in the stall for his groans."

"Run and tell him that I am coming," answered Bruyere, whose face was suddenly clouded.

Then turning to the old man:—

"Good father, go; Master Chouart will show you what to do—his own good experience will encourage you; follow my advice — you will be the better for it, and need never want again to get me to speak *against* this earth that suckles us all. But I am going to tell you some words which may convert your dry, exhausted soil into fat and fertile land; these are the words, good father; mind you don't forget them:—

"Till a little, till it well.
Each new year, raise new crop.
Fat the land, and gather plenty.
Sow the mead, and mow the grass.
Without grass, you feed no cattle.
Without cattle, no manure.
No manure, alas! no seed.

"Practise these precepts, good father," added Bruyere, in a gentle, soothing voice; "you will no longer curse, but bless the fruitful earth that God has given you."

After having said these last words, Bruyere went and kissed the little sleeping child, took hold of the large horny hand of Master Chouart and shook it with her own little one, waved her hand gracefully to the old grumbler, and then hastening to the farm—she disappeared as light and elastic as a fairy.

CHAPTER XII.

OLD JEMMY.

BEFORE she entered the stable, at the back of which old Jemmy lay groaning, and calling on her, Bruyere took the little basket from the place where she had laid it down; this basket contained some fine wild mulberries of reddish blue colour, and some of their juice had stained the fresh vine leaves at the sides of the basket.

Bruyere slipped through one of the many wide crevices in the wall, and entered the stable.

At that time the moon was rising as round and shining as a shield; and one of its rays, making its way through a crack in the roof, threw a faint glimmering light on the extremity of this ruinous shed.

There she stopped: for from this spot it was that every now and then the painful groans proceeded which had disturbed the farm servants during their meal. The girl fixed her eyes in sorrow upon a picture but little new to her; yet it was one, however, which always grieved her anew.

A litter of rye-straw covered the wet ground, scarcely protected from the rain by a few trusses of broom, laid upon perches, which in that part took the place of the roofing, the dilapidated timber of which threw a dark shadow on the blue transparent firmament in which the moon was then shining.

On that mean and filthy bed, meaner and more filthy by far than the litter of beasts of burden, a human form lay quivering; it was only half covered with pieces of blankets; whatever old age and misery, combined with bed-ridden pangs, can offer to the eye most horrible and saddening was there collected together.

Figure to yourself an old man, of fourscore, so singularly warped in his limbs and frame that it seemed as if some ruthless hand, striking him with palsy when he was stooping over a furrow, had condemned the wretch to remain for ever in that posture, his head bent down to the earth.

But the ruthless hand which had done this was not superhuman: it was merely the will of man making his profit out of man, that had reduced this creature of God to so frightful a state of deformity.

Nor was it one of those rare and distressing phenomena, here and there to be noted by the philosopher. For who is there but must have seen, alas! too frequently in our fields, both old men and old women, dragging themselves along with the help of a stick, literally *bent in two;* so that their trunk,

leaning forward, formed almost a straight angle with their lower limbs, and in that posture seemed to be soldered? Nothing is more common than these malformations of body among a class devoted to incessant and excessive labour. These bodies, already debilitated, and growing every day weaker through want of proper food, losing their strength and elasticity, keep by degrees the *bend*, the posture they are used to; constantly leaning towards the earth, their aged joints grow rusty, their loose and feeble limbs, exposed to cold and damp, become stiff and locked together; age advances upon them, and the day comes at last when the unfortunate beings increase the number of human martyrs to the labour inflicted by man on man.

Certainly, if we read in some legend that a vindictive God, wishing to punish a murderer, had struck him with palsy at the very moment when, stooping over his victim, with a raised dagger, he was aiming the blow; and that that God, to give mankind an example, had said to the assassin:—

"You shall live, but your body is cursed; and shall keep the same shape as it had when you were going to slay your victim."

There would still be a moral in that legend.

But when one reflects on the cruel paradox of certain fortunate idlers in the world, supported by false priests and conceited economists, who legitimate the most pitiless and selfish maxims by proclaiming that it is the will of God that man shall be for ever condemned, on this earth, to tears, misery, and despair; we could hardly wonder to hear one of these believers in the destiny of evil, cry out in regard to such a legend:—

"Vassals of the fields! your accursed race shall for ever bow your heads to this barren earth, fattened by your sweat; for such is your fate! our God condemns you, by our command, to labour, poverty, and everlasting pain; and in order that it may be evident to every body that such fated lot is yours, a large number of you, smitten with immobility by the divine will, at the moment when, fulfilling their destiny, they are groping the furrow, —shall continue for ever in that posture as living symbols of the immutable decree ordained to punish your cursed and disinherited race."

* * * * * *

And if such barbarous words as these are not uttered, still are there facts more barbarous than these which are witnessed every day.

Loneliness, desertion, a wretched end, a last agony of torture, after long years of crushing toil; such is the lot which awaits the *invalids* of agricultural labour, in our social state.

No tutelary foresight, no careful regard for their declining age, is shown to those poor enduring instruments of the fundamental wealth of the country.

And yet, unjust society, look at the comparison!

These vassals cultivate the corn—and yet *they eat no wheat.*

They sow the green pastures, fat your herds and flocks—and yet *they eat no meat.*

They teach the vine to grow—and yet *they drink no wine.*

They shear the warm fleece of the sheep—and yet *they shiver beneath their filthy rags.*

They cut the wood to fill your hearths, and to prop your roofs, and yet—*they die for want of fire and shelter.*

Finally, what are they doomed to?—pitiless indifference and slaughterous contempt; too happy at last if they find, like old Jemmy, protected by Bruyere, the litter of an old broken stable to sink down in and die amidst the most exquisite and excruciating aches and pains.

At the sight of Bruyere, the bed-ridden sufferer, rolling about his litter, suspended his groans, and turned his head with difficulty towards the young girl.

The face of this octagenarian was lividly white, and frightfully emaciated; his hollow and almost extinguished eye was animated solely by the glare of fever; laid on his side, his bony knees reached up to his skinny chest: for near two years his limbs had continued in a manner soldered in this posture; his right hand alone had retained some liberty of motion.

This aged man was indebted to the farmer's charity for this shelter and what little food he shared with the servants. For very many years old Jemmy had worked on that farm, first as a grub labourer; but that rough toil, in the midst of marshy moors, having produced the first symptoms of his infirmity, the farmer, confiding in his honesty, had entrusted him with his flock. The duty of a shepherd, though active, did not require, like the toil of grubbing up the land, so much display of strength; so old Jemmy retained the care of the herd until the day when entirely limb-locked and really bent in two, he fell down exhausted on that litter from which he could not rise again. The loneliness in which he was left at the back of that stable, the acuteness of his cureless pangs, the consciousness that he could hope for no relief but death, had thrown the old man into the deepest apathy, attended by the most obstinate silence; the only person in whose favour the old man ever broke this absolute silence was the young, kind-hearted nurse who tended him—little Bruyere.

Some men, endowed by nature in a manner equally strange and surprising, *are born* geometricians, astrologers, painters, musicians, &c. &c. By what mystic phenomena it is that these privileged men attain and surpass, often without labour, and at a single bound, the extreme limits of certain sciences and art, none can tell; but the fact is as evident as it is extraordinary.

Old Jemmy was one of these privileged men. Born a tiller, he had long foreseen, not only the improvements, but the fluctuations which science, which experience would cause in agriculture (hitherto unhappily but seldom carried out into practice, thanks to the crassid ignorance in which the field labourers are left to stagnate); several experiments, tried by himself on small patches of land, had convinced old Jemmy of the value of his ideas. Bordering on geology by his knowledge of the action of different kinds of chalky manure, composed with and suited to different soils; bordering on natural history by his significant observations on the health and physiology of cattle; and finally bordering on botany by a very sagacious classification of the different vegetable manures, old Jemmy was a treasure of practical science; and his treasure had long lain hidden from the world; and nobody ever dreamt of its existence.

This dissimulation had been induced neither by ill-nature, selfishness, nor that kind of fierce jealousy which sometimes prompts the inventor to hide his discoveries with the same care that the miser hides his gold. No; a deep-rooted and careless indifference alone had prevented old Jemmy from parading his skill and turning it to account. Besides, what interest, what incitement was there which could induce him to do so? Whether his master's field produced little or much, what did it matter to him? His low wages and his painful toil would still be the same; in his ignorance of himself, the old husbandman could not be stimulated to ambition, to pass for an innovator. Still, as he was after all a good fellow, and was disgusted with the disastrous effects of *routine*, he did endeavour several times to give a few hints, admirable in reasoning and practical knowledge; they turned their backs upon him, and called him crazed, and that was enough: from that time forward, whether a tiller or a shepherd, he resolved to be neither more nor less wise than his fellow labourers; till at length the day came when he lost the use of

his limbs, and fell down upon his litter never to rise again. From that day he seemed to have made a vow of absolute silence.

However, after leading that sad and melancholy life for a few months, without the diversion of external objects, a prey to the acutest pains, abandoned to his own thoughts, the old man began to feel some remorse for having so long left without culture that marvellous aptness which the Almighty had given him, and which might have been made so fruitful.

Bruyere, who was then fourteen, attended the old man with the most affectionate solicitude; the grace and intelligence of this child were extraordinary; her understanding had been greatly enlarged, thanks to her education, which the strangest of all teachers, Bête-Puante, the poacher, used to give her every day in the midst of the lonely moors, or the woods. For that man, after having forsaken an humble and obscure, but intellectual, career, for a wandering life, had felt a pleasure in cultivating the generous, tender, and lofty sentiments and feelings of this young girl.

Old Jemmy, more and more astonished at the rare capacity and many good qualities of Bruyere, resolved to make her a channel through which to convey and propagate the treasure of his collected experience, which he so bitterly reproached himself for having too long buried in his mind. To Bruyere—but to her alone—he spoke from that day; shaping his communications in a summary of axioms, at once brief, simple, and clear; he taught the young girl patiently, and her penetrating mind soon enabled her to appreciate those excellent precepts.

Old Jemmy, knowing full well the superstitious *wants* of the people in that solitary country, had drawn from Bruyere a formal pledge never to divulge the source of her knowledge, as her advices would have all the more weight and authority, from seeming to be strange and mystical. The sort of awe which already hung over the girl, owing to her beauty, to her *charm*, to her native originality, served old Jemmy to his wish; they would have laughed at the advices of an old bed-ridden peasant; but in the mouth of Bruyere they received them with superstitious reverence, and these advices became oracles, when it was seen that their effects were nearly always invariably happy.

Such was the secret source of Bruyere's knowledge.

Unfortunately, at a later period, grief, loneliness, and finally age, conspired to weaken the mind of the old husbandman, and his memory became all but extinct; if at times the past would recur to him, he mistook these faint recollections for fresh dreams; for the last two months especially, the presence even of Bruyere could hardly withdraw him from his dull and sullen apathy.

Twice, however, old Jemmy had raised himself from this torpid state, and had spoken to others besides the young girl.

The first time, he had urgently requested an interview with Count Duriveau, the owner of the farm; but the Count having met this entreaty with disdainful mockery, old Jemmy had made no other reply than this:—

"*He is wrong—he is wrong.*"

Afterwards, the poor old man had requested them to bring to him the poacher, Bête-Puante.

The latter came.

After a long and private interview with the old shepherd, an interview in which the name of MARTIN was frequently made use of, the poacher left the stable, with a pale and distorted aspect.

Then old Jemmy sunk back again into his mood of obstinate silence.

In vain did the poacher return the next day, and attempt to extort a few words from him; old Jemmy continued dumb.

At another time, after the visit of a stranger, who looked like a peasant, old Jemmy had again sent for the poacher, and had held a long interview with him.

About a month after this conversation (and a short time previous to the opening of our story) one of the two tattered chambers, occupied by the farmer, was separated from his own lodging by a passage, and rendered in some degree habitable, with the addition of some plain furniture brought there from Vierzen, the nearest town. In the course of a few days and in the night, a small cart with tent-cloth blinds, came to the farm, when a woman wrapped in a countrywoman's mantle got out of this vehicle, and, since that time, she had continued to live in the same room, without ever stirring out of it, living in so complete a solitude, that excepting the farmer, who had received her, and Bruyere who visited her every day, the servants of the farm had hardly caught a glimpse of the stranger.

In spite of these events, which he was no stranger to, and which the poacher was the means of informing him of, old Jemmy never saw this woman and sunk back into his former tactiturnity; still, since the morning of that day when the events we are relating took place, the old man had seemed a prey to a strange agitation.

Contrary to his custom, during the course of the day, he had called most urgently for Bruyere, who, for several days, used to bring him from the fields a basket of wild mulberries, the soft acidity of which served to refresh the parched palate of the old shepherd.

"Here are your mulberries, old Jemmy," said the girl, kneeling down by the litter: "forgive me for keeping you waiting; some poor people from the vale came to ask my advice, and I have taught them what I learned from you. They thank me, they bless me," added Bruyere in a soothing voice. "Ah! how sorry I am not to be able to say to them: 'It's father James you ought to bless and to thank.'"

It seemed as if the old man, losing the memory which he had recovered for a while, had already forgotten for what reason he had so eagerly called out on Bruyere during the day; he looked at her with a dull listless eye, and appeared neither to know or understand her.

"You called me," said Bruyere to him mildly: "do you want to speak to me, father James?"

"Father James speaks to nobody now," replied the old man, after a pause of silence, "nor does any body speak to him; why should he speak? When *Sauvageon*—the old black bull—died old and foundered, did he speak? did any one speak to him?"

On hearing these bitter words, which too plainly showed how weak the old man's mind had become, Bruyere sighed; then, wishing to draw him out of his gloomy thoughts, she said to him:

"Remember what you are, and what you have been, father James; in your time there was not a better tiller than you; they still speak of your diligent industry; they say in the vale that you have cleared as much as a quarter of an acre in a day with your dibble!

"Yes," said the aged husbandman, exultingly, and seeming to recollect himself,—"yes, my dibble was twice as big and twice as heavy as other people's; and from morning till night I used to handle it so briskly and so close to the ground, that I did not see the sky once an hour. But, why do I remember such things now?" resumed he with bitter despondency; "Sauvageon was likewise a good beast of burden. He had no equal for clearing lands of roots or stumps: he drew the plough almost without guiding. And when like me, Sauvageon became foundered, they left him to die of pain in this very stable, in yonder corner. Sauvageon or myself, its all one,—only he is dead, and, before he died, he did not remember his days of youth and strength. Is

it not better to lose one's memory and remain dumb like Sauvageon than to envy him?"

"But remember, father James, you were something besides a strong and hearty labourer,—think of all you have taught me—those lessons which turn barren land into fertile," returned Bruyere sorrowfully; "it is a reward—to be able to say that one does so much good with what one knows."

Another flash of pride shone for a moment in the dull cold eyes of the old man, and he answered:

"It is true, that in my time I knew many things: if I had spoken—if they had listened to me—poverty would have been wealth; misfortune—happiness."

Then, suddenly breaking off, the old man, more and more dejected, resumed with bitter irony:

"No, I was not a mere strong beast of burden like Sauvageon—my understanding was good: so was that of *Captain*, my last dog; at a sign, he would lead, drive, or stop the herd at my desire, and he alone was better to keep them from wandering than a thickset hedge. Well! after all his sagacity and courage, he died here at my feet, blind, and toothless, and almost lamed by a wolf he had strangled. Captain, I, or Sauvageon, it's all the same; the wicked say: 'Will they never go off, those *worthless bread-takers*, those *good-for-nothings*;' the good say: 'Poor Sauvageon! poor father James! poor Captain! In their time, what an ox! what a labourer! what a dog! Now they are all thrown on their backs, lamed by THEIR DUTY, and only fit to die.'"

Tears filled the eyes of Bruyere. Never had the old man complained of his fate so bitterly.

"Father James," said she, leaning over him, "do n't you remember me? it is I, Bruyere, who love you so dearly. Just now you called for me, they say; what did you want? Speak; your daughter will obey you."

At this appeal, a transient glow of memory and reason dawned in the eyes of the aged labourer: he swept his hand over his forehead, and answered in a weak voice:

"Yes, true, all day long, my child, I did call for you. What was it for? I can't tell now. Perhaps to speak to you about the dream I had. But why was it so late?" added he to himself,—"why so late in coming to me, this dream?"

"What dream, father James?"

"A dream—as already—I think, I have had two, it 's a long while—a long while ago," said the old man, endeavouring to collect his thoughts; "once, after this dream, I wanted to see Count Duriveau. Yes, it was the Count—but he did not come,—he was wrong. Why? I do n't remember now,—but the poacher came instead of him. And then, after the other dream—the other dream,—but I can't remember any more."

"You sent for me, father James, to speak to me about your dream," said Bruyere softly. "Well! tell it, I will attend to you; and after that you must eat these mulberries, which you like, and which are so good for you."

The old man raised his hand again to his brow, pressed against it with convulsive strength, as if to stop the progress of reason and memory, which he felt were ready to leave him; he then resumed in a quick voice:

"Yes, that 's it. I have it now; all day I kept calling for you; it was to speak to you of the dream. I dreamt, you see, that you had been delivered to me quite a child, and that I carried you down yonder to the moor where the lapwings fly, near the mast, and that I had deposited you in a tuft of heath; you were about five years old; and then I pretended to have found you there by chance——"

"You! you!" cried the young girl, not knowing whether the old man was delirious, or whether he really recalled a fact long since occurred; she therefore repeated with amazement, "You?"

"I do n't know; it may have been, since I now dream about it."

"But these dreams, father James," replied Bruyere, astounded by this unexpected disclosure; "but these dreams may be your memory returning from long past events. Say, who was it committed me to your hands?"

"Wait; it was—a person; a person I do n't know. Still there was something in her which struck me. What was it?"

Again the old man swept his hand over his forehead.

Bruyere, more and more agitated and uneasy, suppressed her curiosity, fearing to break the thread of the old man's thoughts, so weak, so vacillating, and unsafe.

"You know," said he, after a few moments' silence, during which he collected his thoughts; "you know the ruins of the bake-house, on the edge of the pond behind the farm?"

"Alas!" muttered Bruyere on hearing these words, whose seeming incoherence destroyed her hopes too soon conceived, too readily trusted to.

"Yes," continued the aged labourer, "it was so in my dream. Behind this deserted bake-house there was an oven, which was stopped up then. Stay, till I remember what follows. Yes, that was it; then taking out a brick, I hid in that forsaken bake-house what the party had entrusted to me, saying, 'To give it to the child, whom you will call Bruyere: you must, until she is—you must wait, that is why, hitherto, I told you nothing; and now to-day I tell you, because'—because—My God, I forget—I no longer remember," muttered the poor old man, whose voice, firm enough when he began, grew fainter and thicker every moment.

There was one fact so clear and well defined in this disclosure, that Bruyere exclaimed:

"The place you speak of, the ruins of the bake-house, I know it. Am I allowed to go there and fetch what you concealed in it? Is it any thing relating to my birth? Oh! in pity, father James, another effort. Answer me."

"Oh! my head is dizzy," said the sufferer, shutting his eyes, as if exhausted by the efforts he had already made, in order to relate to Bruyere what he mistook for a dream, and which was one of his rare revivals of memory.

"Father James!" exclaimed Bruyere, leaning over the old man's litter "I entreat you: one more effort. That person—was it my mother? or my father? Do you know if they still live?"

"I know it no longer," muttered the old man in a stifled voice.

"My mother? one other word—my mother?"

Father James moved his lips mechanically, a few inarticulate sounds fell from them, then he shut his eyes, and uttered from time to time very heavy groans of anguish, as if, diverted for a moment from his sufferings by his interview with the young girl, he had felt them return with renewed violence.

After a few more attempts, Bruyere, assured that her entreaties were vain, and grieved to see she could not relieve the old man, settled the straw which served as a pillow, put the small basket of mulberries within his reach, and left the stall trembling and agitated, and musing on the strange revelation of father James.

However ardent her curiosity might be respecting the mysterious hiding-place mentioned by the old shepherd, the young girl over-ruled her impatience; a pale light was still visible in the farmer's room, and Bruyere postponed her visit to the bake-house till every one was in bed.

Besides, every morning and every night Bruyere used to call upon the female stranger who, having come to the farm by night, had now been settled there some time.

The young girl, then, having walked along by the buildings surrounding the yard, went out of this

enclosure, and knocked at a little door which opened at the back of the house, and looked upon the edge of the immense marshy pond we spoke of before, and whose waters had at that time risen very high.

At this moment, also, Beaucadet, hastening his horse's pace, and that of his escort, was fast approaching the farm of Grand-Genevre, to come and arrest Bruyere, accused, or rather suspected of infanticide.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PORTRAIT.

It was necessary to cross a small dark landing before reaching the chamber which Bruyere had entered, by following the course of the outward walls of the farm, along the edge of the pond.

This chamber, humble in itself, was almost luxurious compared with the broken condition of the farm: a new paper had been put on, which served to conceal the mud built walls, recently plastered; the high chimney with its wooden mantel-piece, and ornamented with a band of green serge festooned in the old fashion and laced with yellow, whilst a large carpet, stretched before the fire, partly covered the shining red tiles of the floor; a good bed, a few pieces of plain neat furniture, formed the household moveables of this apartment, which was lighted during the day by a small old window, paned with green glass encased in lead.

One of these luminaries which are used in the country, consisting of a candle, the light of which is augmented by passing through a glass globe filled with water, lighted this room, and threw its vivid rays over a woman sitting at the corner of the fire-place, in an elbow chair. She seemed so deep in thought, that she did not perceive the entrance of Bruyere, who stood still and silent at the door.

Close to this woman stood a small frame, covered with green cloth, on which several thin white threads fastened by thousands of brass pins, ran across each other; to these threads small ebony bobbins were suspended; the lace begun upon the frame was very beautiful, and testified to the skill of an excellent work-woman.

Madame Perrin, that was the name of the woman—appeared to be about forty-five; she must have been admirably beautiful. Her white peasant cap closed tightly above two bands of hair as black as jet, surrounded her forehead, which, like all her complexion, was very brown; her black eyes were very open and brilliant, her eye-brows were finely arched; and her looks wandered about sometimes on vanancy, sometimes on two objects which we shall presently speak of. The very dark complexion of Madam Perrin was pale and rather sickly, the thinness of her face lengthened its appearance, and brought out too sensibly the sharp point of her aquiline nose; upon her mouth, which was gracefully formed, sat a melancholy smile; her pensive brow leant upon her hand. She wore a very neat peasant's dress, which, being black, set off the whiteness of her head-dress and her large neck-handkerchief.

At times, a slight shuddering occasioned a tremor at once on the lips and dark eye-brows of this woman; it was a nervous motion resulting from the effects of a cruel malady.

For Madame Perrin during many years had been mad.

Her madness, though raving at first, had gradually changed its character: a painful, but inoffensive, melancholy had taken the place of her former frenzy. Time and attention had operated a cure all but radical, and the deep tranquillity she enjoyed since her abode at the farm had entirely consolidated that cure.

After an attentive study of the temper of this poor woman, and especially of the keen and gloomy feelings she retained in consequence of her illness, the physician, contrary to the usual course, had recommended her, especially during the first few months she was to pass at the farm, to live almost in complete solitude. In truth, she felt so much humility and shame when she thought of her past life, that the presence even of the benevolent caused her extreme pain. "Undoubtedly," said the doctor, "these keen susceptible feelings will vanish by degrees; but for fear of a relapse, probably incurable, she must live in seclusion." These conditions of safety were so much in harmony with her tastes, that she was happy to conform to them: during the day she never went out; but at night, and especially when the moon shone most brightly, Madame Perrin would often take a long walk on the margin of the pond.

Bruyere alone, was admitted to see her every day, and did her a thousand kind offices. At first she met with a reception marked by a jealous reserve, behind which was a painful sullen shame; but the young girl was able by degrees, with her native affability, and her attentive kindness, to lull the apprehension of the poor sufferer. Madame Perrin soon began to feel the most tender concern for Bruyere, a genial sentiment which assisted in securing and confirming the cure of the pooor maniac.

Since her entry into this dwelling, Bruyere, as we said before, had remained unnoticed, thanks to the pensive contemplation in which the woman was sunk; the articles on which, silent and fixed, she alternately kept gazing, were two portraits and two letters.

One of these portraits, a miniature painting, lay on her lap, in a morocco box, standing partly open.

The other portrait was much larger (three feet by two) and was encased in a kind of frame forming the upper part of a chest of drawers made of walnut wood.

The miniature was the likeness of a young man about thirty, of dark complexion, with bright eyes, black curly hair, a rather long face, and a countenance sprightly and resolute. His features, allowing for the difference of age and expression, were extremely like those of Madame Perrin. This resemblance was however accounted for by these words, engraved on the frame: "MARTIN TO HIS GOOD MOTHER."

The other portrait bore the date of 1845. Its magnificent bronze frame, carved and gilt, and surmounted with the insignia of royalty, formed a singular contrast with the poverty of that cottage.

This splendid frame contained the full-length portrait of a king reigning over a people in the north of Europe; this prince, dressed with the greatest simplicity, wore a blue coat, a white waistcoat, and a black cravat.

The physiognomy of this monarch, still a young man, expressed a strange mixture of lofty intellect, resolution, and kindness; his smile though mournful was soft, *as if an early acquaintance with mankind had hurt his heart, without altering his native kindness;* his look seemed at once to be thoughtful and piercing; in other respects those features were void of regularity; his lips were thick, his nose long, his face square, his eyes alone were splendid and of azure blue, singularly harmonising with his short, smooth, fair hair, and his thick mustachios of the same colour.

The attitude, the features of the prince, sufficiently bespoke a simplicity—we might almost say a good nature—which was extreme, if good nature was not considered to be incompatible with energy; his robust and lofty stature, his square prominent chest, his broad shoulders, his fleshy neck, his muscular hands, presented rather the plebeian than the

aristocratic type, and manifested both health and vigour.

The subsidiary parts of this portrait were numerous and remarkable.

In the dark background of the portrait raised upon two altars, probably as a token of pious reverence, two busts presented their severe profile in white marble, painted by the artist in a mystic shade half tinted.

One of these busts represented the Roman Brutus: the other bust was that of Marcus Aurelius.

The Phrygian cap with which they had dressed the inflexible face of Brutus was painted in scarlet, and surrounded with a radiant halo which glittered in the shade, where the artist had, no doubt designedly, left this bust as well as that of the great and good Roman Emperor. The pensive forehead of the latter seemed likewise to shine with more than human brightness.

It was easy to discern in this distinguished homage a transcendent proof of this king's worship of the great Emperor and the great tribune.

If you conceive the pious admiration of a sovereign for Marcus Aurelius, one of those men more than human, one of those adorable and thrice blessed souls who seem to come directly from above, you will perhaps not so readily understand how an absolute prince, as the monarchs of the north are, all of them, should have vowed a religious admiration, a kind of idolatry to that unyielding tribune in whom we view, the masculine virtue, and fiery independence of a *truly republican soul.*

Such were the two pictures which Dame Perrin, the close inhabitant of the farm, was gazing upon with a look of deep reflection, and from which she only moved her eyes at times to read over again certain passages of the two epistles in her lap.

One of these letters was in these terms:—

"*Paris, the 20th of October*, 1845.

"Good and Affectionate Mother,

"In a few days more I shall see you: until then be patient, and cheer up; above all have no fear; *Claude* watches over you, and answers for the good faith of the farmer; you never stir out by day, Count Duriveau never visits his farms, and if chance lead him to yours, you have nothing to dread by meeting him. He has not seen you for more than thirty years, and, my dear mother, you have borne so much sorrow since then, you are so altered, that it would be impossible for him to know you.

"You shall soon know my project; and why, after my return from the north, summoned to France by the tardy revelation of Claude, I tried, and, thanks to the strong recommendation of one of my former masters, succeeded to obtain the place of *Valet de Chambre* to Count Duriveau.

"On this point likewise, good and affectionate mother, have no fear; the trial has been made. I am satisfied with myself. In the Count's presence I remained, cool, impenetrable; and yet, during that strange interview I kept repeating inwardly, the better to fathom my own feelings:

"*This man, who now so disdainfully questions and examines me, is my own father; he does not know that I am his son, the son of that poor child of sixteen, whom formerly in his cruelty, he*——

"But enough, enough, good mother; what is the use of these dreadful recollections? Only this—by the steadiness I showed during that interview, you may judge of my self-command. So, I say it again, cheer up. During my conversation with the Count, and, in spite of the thoughts, the feelings of every kind by which I was assailed, my coolness never forsook me once, and I answered his haughty questions with so much point, respect, and composure, that I was engaged by him on the instant.

"Do not wonder too much at this powerful self-control that I am able to exercise; for you must know, dear mother, the life of a domestic servant which I had recently given up, but which I endured so long a time, has so much accustomed me to drive my feelings far within myself, that an outward impassibility has taken in me the place of a second nature.

"So, my beloved mother, I conjure you again not to have any misgivings on this score. My cause is a just and proper one:—believe me, my designs will succeed.

"You ask me how it happened that the portrait I sent you came into my possession? the letter that I enclose you—a simple, noble, and touching letter it is—will explain it. In sending it to you, dear mother, and reflecting that it will be read and appreciated by you, noble heart so cruelly tried, I have, for the first time perhaps in my life, felt pride as I said to myself, 'She will be proud of her son;' and then again, I glorified myself as the child of the poor working girl, basely seduced, inhumanly deserted, *the child of the people*, who, after the most wretched, and perilous life—yet one full of adventures and incidents—has come to be——. But excuse me, my dear mother; I perceive that this first impulse of pride is a very acute and strong one. It is not for me to be proud, but for you, if satisfied with your son.

"Farewell, affectionate mother, we shall soon meet; perhaps in three or four days I shall see you, for my *master* sets out, I hope, the day after to-morrow for Sologne, and prudence will oblige me to refrain from going to you the same day.

"Farewell once more, my adored mother; I kiss your hands with pious reverence.

"Your dutiful son,

"Martin."

The second letter, on which Madame Perrin's eyes frequently fell with a mother's pride, was written to Martin by the King, whose portrait has been described.

"*3rd of August*, 1845.

"I owe you my life, Martin. I owe you a still greater debt than life. Accept this portrait as a proof of my esteem and gratitude.

"It is now about a year since a very strange adventure brought us together. You could not guess who I was, thanks to the *incognito* I had assumed; and you saved me from a mortal danger.

"I wished to know to whom I was indebted for my life; your story was a simple one: having come to that country in the retinue of a master, then weary of that service, you had turned artisan—thus resuming the first employment of your childhood, in order to earn the money you required to return to France.

"A third person came up to us; he knew me again, and uttered my name. To my great wonder I own, you evinced no surprise, no adulation; and, to my still greater astonishment, there was no vain presumption in your attitude: it was noble and simple. Sensibly struck on meeting so much tact and compass in a workman, feeling towards you a lively sense of gratitude, I desired to be alone with you. I then asked you how I could testify my sense of the service you had just rendered me: I shall never forget your reply.

"'Sire, you can do nothing for me; I am young and strong; I have no family to keep; and in the space of a few days more I shall have earned what I want to return to France. But here—in this country likewise—there are many workmen who are not, like me, young, strong, and void of care as to the future. There are some who, burdened with a family, are honest and diligent, and who endure most cruel privations; think of the undeserved sufferings of these, *our brethren*. Sire; do so that

they may suffer less, and I will bless God for having made me the instrument of saving your life.'

"These words, which you delivered with feeling and emphasis, renewed my astonishment; for the first time (as since then I have told you) my attention was called to those sufferings always looked upon as fatal, inevitable, and irremediable. The singular circumstance which had brought us together lent a peculiar aspect to your generous entreaty. More and more impressed by a proof of disinterestedness and greatness of heart, which I thought so unusual among men of your class, I spoke to you long and fully, for I wanted to learn every particular of your life. You must certainly have fancied that my desire was in a great measure the effect of idle curiosity, and you gave me to understand that trust and confidence may be gained but cannot be commanded; I then spoke to you about the wretchedness of those people whom you called *our brethren;* this was no longer a personal subject, but the cause of your own kind that you pleaded. Then you became more eloquent; your address was simple, moving, and above all true. You quoted facts, and irrefutable statistics; you described to me in a few brief words scenes and pictures of inexorable exactness; you revealed to me some awful things until then unknown to me; and if, in that first interview, you did not yet shake such prejudices, and confirmed opinions, as time had rendered unyielding, you had already provoked my attention, and roused a spirit of inquiry within me.

"I confess my suspicions to you the more readily, that you conquered them; for awhile I imagined that, overrating the notice I took of you, your pride, and ambition might be roused, and that you would shortly endeavour to recall yourself to my memory: but no. I learned from another quarter that the day after our interview you had resumed your daily labours, and continued them, without making any mention of your accidental meeting with me.

"Since then, I felt a desire to see you again: we met, and the interviews between us, whilst nobody knew of them, were frequent. I was able to appreciate more and more the rectitude, sound understanding, and loftiness of mind, for which you are distinguished; I did not ask you by what strange course of events it had happened that you, who in heart and mind appeared to be so greatly raised above other men, had yet resigned yourself to a life of servitude;—that was your secret, and I respected it.

"I was the better for these meetings. At my request, and merely consenting to take upon you a manual duty, which you fulfilled with rigid punctuality,—so nice and tetchy are your scruples,—you agreed to remain for some time in my country; our connexion, constantly kept secret, was highly prized by me; *as a foundling, you had witnessed every condition of human life*—all the misery of the poor; afterwards, your adventurous career, and your opportunities as a household servant, had placed you in contact with every class of society, as well the highest as the lowest and most degraded.

"Born with a disposition to think and to observe, and endowed with a just and penetrating mind, you have reflected long and deeply on all you have seen, studying full as much the causes of things as their results; sincere and upright, you have neither magnified nor extenuated what you had discovered whether good or evil in that *great class of the people* which you boasted to belong to. Thus being certain of your good faith, I for a long time pondered over the instructive facts you had taught me,—instructive facts which were fraught with variety, life, and interest, which, before I met you, I never could encounter; for there is nothing more scarce in this world than the union, the combination of a lot such as yours with the mind and character you possess.

"When once my reflections upon these communications had led me into a new channel, I found it at first beset with difficulty and peril. Gradually, and slowly it is true, a new prospect opened to my view; and truths of the greatest consequence dawned upon my mind.

* * * * * *

"You know that I wanted and tried to be grateful to you—and in a manner consonant with your own disposition.

"You set out suddenly for France, where you told me you were summoned by a sacred duty. It was with sorrow and regret I saw you depart—for a long time—perhaps for ever.

"I think you owe me a compensation; if you think the same, grant me a request which now I feel is no longer an improper one.

"Do n't you remember that I once expressed a doubt, not of your sincerity, but of the punctuality of your recollections, with regard to an extraordinary fact you had witnessed; and then you told me that it was hardly possible for you to be deceived by your memory, because you had made it for many years a practice to set down day by day the memorials of your life.

"Now this life of yours must certainly present a very unwonted aspect, and so great a variety of conditions since your childhood, and up to this time, that this narrative, simple and genuine as it is sure to be, I cannot doubt must afford an ample scope for serious reflections. Some words which have fallen from you on this point have likewise struck me:—'*Domestic life, by opening to you the sanctuary of private life, has enabled you,*' *you said,* '*to witness mysteries unknown to the doctor, to the judge, and to the priest;* these three confessors of the soul and body, and the *depraved constitution of family life,* seen and noted by so intimate a witness, had afforded you,' you added, 'the most singular, the most serious instruction.'

"Lend to me, then, these memoirs of your life,—it is not an idle curiosity which induces me to prefer the request. Man is the same all the world over; and what is true in France *is true here;* and for those who are called upon to take a large share in human affairs, the study of man is of powerful and everlasting interest; finally, shall I tell you, that the reading of those memoirs is also necessary for me, because I am possibly mentioned therein, and that those memoirs were not *written for my perusal;* for I know you, and I know that no consideration could change, on my account, the independence of your thoughts.

"I can say no more: you will understand the reason of my reserve. If you refuse my request, I shall be persuaded that some reason, which I shall honour and respect beforehand without knowing its nature, has been the cause and ground of that denial.

"*** ****."

"I have received your letter, No. 2, and thank you for your good remarks on the organisation of the cradle;* these views are admirable. The name of the great philanthropist, whose human genius will thus be the means of saving so many thousands of children, was not yet even known here; whilst at the first cannon that is fired, the name and title of the most stupid men-killer, provided he butchers and ravages without mercy, is echoed in a week from one end of Europe to the other."

* The word used by Eugene Sue is creche, or manger, and the best authorities still apply this word exclusively in that sense, except when speaking or writing of the manger of our Saviour, when it is understood in the metaphorical sense of cradle. In this latter sense the great French novelist appears to have used it. The new school of writers to which this powerful advocate of popular right belongs, has added so largely to the vocabulary of French words, that the French of the last generation is too small a thing to define it. God help those translators who depend upon the former.—*Translator's Note.*

CHAPTER XIV.

THE COMMUNION.

MADAME PERRIN was still too deeply engaged in reading her letters and in contemplating the two portraits, to perceive Bruyere was present.

The young girl, since the imperfect disclosure of old Jemmy—a disclosure so interesting to herself, since it gave her a vague expectation of finding out the secret of her birth, "thanks to certain articles long concealed," said the old man, "in a deserted bake-house;"—the young girl experienced an impatience full of agony; in spite of these acute reflections, she could not, on entering Madame Perrin's chamber, help being struck at the sight of the royal picture, the frame of which being splendidly gilt, drew her attention at once. After having almost involuntarily cast a rapid glance upon it, she averted her eyes, considering it unworthy of her to look any longer upon that picture which she had only discovered by surprise; for Madame Perrin had never opened before Bruyere the upper part of the piece of furniture which enclosed this picture and hid it from view.

In order to put an end to this state of embarrassment, and to awaken the attention of Madame Perrin, the turkey-feeder coughed slightly then more loudly, then at last she moved a chair when she still saw that Madame Perrin continued to be pensive and absent. On hearing this sudden sound she started, rose up abruptly, hastened to close the two leaves of the screen, to hide the portrait, and thrust the two letters and the miniature into her pocket; then turning towards Bruyere, she said to her gently but somewhat disconcerted:

"Good even to you, my child, I did not see you."

"I came in without being heard, Dame Perrin," answered Bruyere, blushing for the indiscretion she had unintentionally committed; "I made a little noise that you might perceive I was here,—deign to excuse me."

Madame Perrin very kindly held out her hand to the young girl, who raised it to her lips.

"The usual time of your coming having past," returned Madame Perrin, "I no longer expected you, my child."

Bruyere saw in this reception an opportunity to come at once to the communion she wanted to hold with the good woman, so she answered in a feeling voice:

"The truth is, old Jemmy was very talkative to-night, Dame Perrin."

"Old Jemmy! that poor old bed-ridden shepherd whom you have sometimes spoken to me about? Did you not tell me that he had long since lost all memory, and would not speak to any one?"

"Very true, Dame Perrin, and therefore was I very much astonished, the more so that what he told me——"

Bruyere did not conclude: agitation and fear were depicted in her countenance. Madame Perrin, astonished at the young girl's hesitation and trouble, resumed:

"You have turned quite pale—you are all in a tremor — my child, what is the matter that you do n't speak? What is the matter then?"

After a short pause, the young girl replied with a bashful look:

"Dame Perrin, I am alone in the world—at present I have none to advise me—I dare not act of my own accord, and I come to you."

"Say on, say on," answered Madame Perrin with affectionate solicitude; "I am not much gifted, but I love you—that will lend me wisdom; I am sure it will."

"Oh! yes I am sure you love me, do n't you, Dame Perrin?" said Bruyere eagerly.

"Do I love you, my child! I love you as I would a daughter if I had one; but fortune has been niggard of her kindness: I never had but one child—a son,—the best of sons—the most worthy," added she with a mother's pride.

Then turning kindly to the girl:

"But you see I have no right to complain; I have a son whom I am proud of, and you love me as a mother, do you not, child?"

"Oh yes, yes, as I should have loved a mother;" then correcting herself, the young girl added in an under voice: "alas! no, to a mother one says all."

And again she was silent, and wiped the tears from her dripping eyes.

"Listen to me, my child: you have for some time past made me uneasy," said Madame Perrin, drawing Bruyere towards her, and kindly taking her hands:—"yes, for some time past you have seemed to me to be pale,—unwell,—thoughtful; about a month ago especially—you know, when you were three whole days without coming here—I thought you so much altered——"

"I had been ill," replied Bruyere hastily, and in a faint voice; "very ill, Dame Perrin, I assure you."

"I perceived it but too well: when I saw you again, you were not the same person; and——"

"I entreat you," exclaimed the young girl, almost imploringly, "do n't let us talk of that!"

"My God, my God! Bruyere, what ails you? what mean these broken speeches, your excitement, your tears?"

"Nothing, Dame Perrin," replied Bruyere, endeavouring to compose herself. "Old Jemmy's words,—and the hopes they have excited,—have turned my head, I fear. Excuse me, Dame Perrin."

"Come, my poor girl," said Madame Perrin, kissing her forehead, "recover yourself; and let us talk together. Just now, you asked my advice respecting what the old shepherd had communicated to you."

"Yes, Dame Perrin; for according to what old Jemmy said to me, perhaps—one day, I may find out my parents."

"By what means?"

Hear me, Dame Perrin: I am a poor deserted child. Perhaps — my father, — my mother, — were driven by necessity to forsake me as they did."

"No: unless they take away a child from its mother by force, or whilst she sleeps: any woman who of her own free will forsakes her child is a monster!" cried Madame Perrin, with strange exultation.

And for the first time since her conference with Bruyere her pale countenance was overspread with a flush, and her eyes shot sparks.

But hardly had the mother of Martin uttered these words, when Bruyere shrieked out, buried her face in both hands, and fell on her knees, exclaiming:

"Pardon! pardon!"

"Bruyere! what is the matter? why do you ask pardon of me?" said Madame Perrin, on witnessing the dismay, the grief, the despair, which spoke in the young girl's face.

Then, suddenly, as she believed she guessed the cause of this agitation, she in her turn became penitent, and resumed in a voice of deep contrition:

"Forgive me, Bruyere: it is for me, dearest child, to entreat pardon of you; for without meaning to do so, and hurried away by a first impulse, I may have insulted your mother. Forgive me, my poor little girl; I was wrong to speak as I did. Alas! it often happens, a poor unfortunate girl,—betrayed, deserted—loses her senses at the time. Who can wonder at it? when fear, and shame——"

"Oh! yes, that 's true, Dame Perrin," cried Bruyere, with a shiver. "Shame—shame is so dreadful—then the jeers of people,—contempt,—when one is not used to it. Oh! shame—I tell you—would kill me."

Hereupon Bruyere, perceiving that at these last words Madame Perrin had started, and was looking at her with anxious surprise and curiosity, she hastened to add:

"So, Dame Perrin, when just now old Jemmy told me that I might perhaps find out my mother, at first my joy was so great—so very great; but soon after I said to myself, if I discover my mother,—if I go to her,—perhaps I shall put her to shame by my presence; for her fault may hardly be known—it may be forgotten: and shall I, her daughter, recall that fault—revive that shame! And yet, to know a mother—to see her! Oh! Dame Perrin, what must I do? You see how much I need your advice. But what ails you? How pale you grow! Your hands shake:—what is the matter? speak!"

"It is nothing, at all, child," answered Madame Perrin, in an altered tone, and sweeping her burning forehead with her hand: "it 's your agitation that I have caught. Besides, if you knew what recollections—oh! such recollections! But let us speak of you, not of me. I now understand why you hesitated; it proves you to have an excellent heart. But tell me how old Jemmy was able to raise your hopes of discovering who were your parents?"

"There are certain things which may assist me to find out the secret of my birth, hidden,' says he, 'in the ruins of the bake-house, yonder, on the edge of the pond."

"How did old Jemmy come to know it?"

"By a dream."

"A dream! Poor child—is it in the dream of an old man, weakened by infirmity, you put your trust?"

"What he calls a dream, Dame Perrin,—is often but a fit of returning memory."

"Has he not given you any further explanation?"

"No, Dame Perrin; after this disclosure he was apparently exhausted, for he sank back into sullen silence."

"But who put those matters there, that he spoke of?"

"He did."

"How did they chance to come into his possession?"

"A stranger gave them to him; that 's all I could glean from him; for then, alas! his memory fled again."

"This is very strange," said Dame Perrin reflecting. "But, however, nothing can be easier than to ascertain the truth of this communication. Where is the hiding-place he pointed out?"

"Close at hand."

"A heap of bricks, covered over with moss and ivy? there, near the pond."

"Yes, Dame Perrin, it was the old bake-house

belonging to the farm; it fell to ruins, and since then another has been built near the house."

After a pause of silence, during which the features of Dame Perrin seemed to be more than ever affected by the nervous tremor before alluded to,—she said to Bruyere:

"Hear me, my child; I think you ought before any thing else to test the reality of old Jemmy's disclosure. The discoveries you may make will then serve to direct your conduct. Don't you think so yourself?"

"Yes, Dame Perrin."

"The time favours you; the whole farm is asleep; why don't you go at once and search this hiding-place?"

"Dame Perrin — sometimes you do go out at night; if you would only accompany me?"

"Most willingly, child."

Just as they were going out, Bruyere snatched up Madame Perrin's hand—her mouth opened as if she were about to speak; then probably yielding to some new thought, she stooped her head dejectedly, let go the hand of her protectress, a deep sigh escaped her, and she muttered out:

"No,—I have not the heart to speak. I dare not."

"What have you not the heart to do, my child?"

"To tell you all—and yet I must do it,—for you must know, Dame Perrin, it is not only for my sake that I wish to know my parents."

"Not only for your sake?"

"Come, come, Dame Perrin," said Bruyere in a hurried voice, as if she dreaded to give way to an involuntary impulse of confidence, "come—what we shall find in the hiding-place may determine me to say all."

The two women then left the chamber and went forth.

The sky was perfectly serene: the moon, then at the full, shone with the clearest brightness above the dark curtain of the lofty fir trees which extended farther than the eye could reach; on the surface of the still and sleeping waters of the pond a white vapour was floating; but these mephitic exhalations disappeared by degrees as the ascension of the moon was slowly performed, whilst her light and glittering tints covered its long expanse with a silver hue.

The silence that reigned there was deep and unbroken.

The evening breeze as it shook the dry reeds, withered by the autumn sun, drew from them a squeaking sound; but when, from time to time, this little noise ceased with the capricious blast of the wind, an attentive ear might have distinguished afar off the dumb and equal cadence produced by the galloping of several horses, which were gradually drawing near.

But Dame Perrin and Bruyere were too busy with their own thoughts to notice this circumstance.

CHAPTER XV.

REVELATIONS.

Madame Perrin and Bruyere soon reached the ruins of the old bake-house; there were only two sides still standing—they were half crumbled, and formed a right angle. In the middle of one of these was the mouth of the oven, rudely stopped up with tiles cemented with earth; thanks to this care, the cavity presented no retreat either to the polecat or the fox, or to any other enemy of the poultry yard. The ivy and briar grew up over the pile, and only exposed to the light of the moon the semi-arch of brick-work formerly calcined and blackened by the flames which issued from the oven.

A few steps from this ruin, situated on the border of the water, the reeds, which surrounded the pond, raised up their fading stalks; in the midst of them, and rather above the water, peered the head of a floodgate intended to let out the water of the pond into a canal covered with rushes, when they dried it to take out the fish.

Madame Perrin's restlessness increased every moment; the various incidents of the day—her stifled thoughts, which still echoed loudly in her own heart—the half confessions, the anxiety of Bruyere, had produced great excitement in Madame Perrin; for, since her recovery, her life had been spent in peace, in the most perfect solitude. Thus she attributed to the strange events of the evening the kind of feverish dizziness which she had felt for some few minutes.

"This is the place!" said Bruyere to her, stopping at the angle formed by the two sides of the bake-house, and pointing out the mouth of the oven to her friend.

The latter replied:

"The hiding-place has this advantage, that one might pass a thousand times this way, and suspect nothing."

"Oh! Dame Perrin, how my heart beats!" said Bruyere trembling; "and yet, it is there."

"Believe me, child, don't let your hopes mislead you too much. But let us make haste; I know not whether it be the coolness of the night," added Madame Perrin, in a faltering voice, "but I shudder from head to foot.

Hardly had she uttered these words before Bruyere, with the true spirit and agility of a country girl, snatched up a broken joist, ran up the heap of rubbish, reached the mouth of the oven, pushed aside the briar and ivy, and soon forced an opening through the brick-work and earth.

Suddenly, at a distance,—and as if the noise proceeded from the north side of the pond,—resounded in the air the cry of the Sologne eagle; but the cry was so far spent in the distant space that it was hardly perceptible.

However, it struck the ear of Bruyere; she stood up with anxiety and listened.

"What is the matter?" inquired Madame Perrin, who had not heard the cry; "what ails you, my child?"

Bruyere, still silent and motionless, made a sign of entreaty with her hand to Madame Perrin, bent her head, and once more listened most anxiously.

But she heard no more; either the cry was not repeated, or it had been stifled by one of those light blasts of wind, which, blowing from time to time in contrary directions, was still bringing nearer and nearer the noise of several horses urged to a gallop.

"My child," said Madame Perrin, in a voice of pain and suffering, "I entreat you to make haste; I do n't feel well."

These words recalled Bruyere to herself; in a few seconds she had cleared away a sufficient opening to enter within the dark cavity; but Madame Perrin seized hold of her clothes, and said to her:—

"My child—take care; there are venomous serpents in this country: suppose any reptile was hidden in that hole."

"Fear nothing, Dame Perrin; the time is not yet come when snakes lie down and grow stiff."

So saying, Bruyere slipped easily from Madame Perrin's hold, and soon disappeared in the dark shade beneath the roof of the oven.

Just then—but Bruyere could not hear it this time—the cry of the Sologne eagle resounded anew: it was a shrill, distinct cry, and drew nearer.

"A bird of prey—it is a sad omen," whispered Madame Perrin, starting.

Then, as if this thought had but increased her fears for the young girl, she leant over the black mouth of the oven, and exclaimed:—

"Bruyere, my child; speak to me."

"I am feeling along the roof, and all about,

Dame Perrin; but I cannot find any thing," answered the young girl, sorrowfully.

"I was sure of it, poor child!" said Madame Perrin.

Then, turning to windward, and listening, she added in an under tone:—

'How strange!—it sounds like the gallop of several horses."

She listened again, and resumed:—

"They are the colts at some farm in the neighbourhood which are left in the fields all night, and are playing in the moonlight——"

Suddenly, the young girl shrieked out.

"What happens?" said Madame Perrin, alarmed. "Bruyere, for mercy's sake speak!"

"It's a small chest, Dame Perrin." And, in another moment the girl came to the opening, palpitating with unexpected joy.

In spite of her agitation, her uneasiness, and her curiosity, mingled with solicitude for Bruyere's discovery, Madame Perrin stood still.

"Thanks! God be praised! old Jemmy did not deceive me: perhaps I shall know who my mother is," said Bruyere, in a voice tremulous with emotion; then, at one spring, she reached Madame Perrin's side, and said to her:—

"Behold the chest!"

This chest was remarkable solely for its singular shape: it was round, with a flat bottom and a swelling lid; it was easy to see by some pieces of stuff, which time and the weather had respected, that it formerly had been overlaid with green serge, fastened to the wood with small brass headed tacks, their heads worn by verdigris; this box might formerly have served as a case to a silk frame, such as we have seen in Madame Perrin's room, near her elbow chair.

The heads of the nails were so arranged as to form themselves into several letters, which figured this name:—

"PERRIN MARTIN."

At the sight of this chest, Madame Perrin was struck with amazement, and seemed to be striving to recollect her thoughts; but soon after, when she read her own name by the brilliant light of the moon, she gave a loud shriek.

"Gracious heavens! Dame Perrin, what ails you?" said Bruyere.

Madame Perrin, without answering, took up the chest to examine it more closely, and with shaking hands and haggard looks she cried out, without reflecting on Bruyere's presence:

"This case is mine; how comes it here? I had taken it away to that house where they carried me when I was not quite mad!"

"You—mad?" cried Bruyere, with affright.

"In that house," continued Madame Perrin, still more incoherent, "in that house, where they kept me so long, and where I left it. I well remember I asked for this case, and other things which I valued—oh! I valued so much; and they replied: that 'they did not understand me.'"

"This case is yours?" cried Bruyere; and then a foolish hope flashed across her mind for a moment: "suppose Dame Perrin should be her mother." But she soon remembered that, shortly before, the latter had expressed her regret at having no daughter.

Not daring to speak, Bruyere awaited with intolerable anguish the unravelling of this mystery.

Madame Perrin had set the case down upon the rubbish. Then with some difficulty, owing to the rust, she moved a spring hook which fastened the case, and opened it, and took out, first of all, an old wicker coral furnished with small bells, such as are sometimes seen in the hands of the children of the poor.

"His coral!" cried Madame Perrin. "My son's coral; I thought it was lost; how glad I am; here it is," and after covering the toy with joyous kisses, she restored it to the case; then she took out a small morocco pocket-book, with a Count's coronet on a small leaf of silver.

"The pocket-book, which his father once let fall," cried Madame Perrin, "and which contained those letters—those fatal letters; and here too are the two little wooden distaffs, sculptured for me by poor Claude, the best, the most unfortunate of men. Oh! how delighted I am! my dear treasures, my beloved relics, so long lamented, I have recovered you at last!"—and again the poor woman covered the relics with tears and kisses, with feverish and fatal excitement, for convulsions now began to mingle with these sobs.

"But what's here? I cannot recollect this—I had not left it," suddenly exclaimed Madame Perrin.

And she laid her hand upon a leather purse rather heavy, which, no doubt eaten by the dampness, sunk beneath the weight of its contents; a number of pieces of gold fell out.

"Gold!" cried she, with increasing surprise.

Then she added:

"What means this parchment?"

And truly, to the purse was tied a slip of parchment, yellow with time, and evidently torn from the cover of an old book.

"There is some writing on it," cried Madame Perrin.

"Read it!—pray, read it!" muttered Bruyere, whose thoughts were quite confused by so many unexpected occurrences.

Thanks to the glittering light of the moon, Madame Perrin was able to read what follows:

"This chest, and all it contains, belongs to the mother of my child; she is five years old, at present. I am obliged to leave my country and forsake her: I leave her to the care of a faithful man. These articles will assist my daughter one day to make herself known to her mother, should I think fit. At a future day I will send new instructions. But, as I may soon be killed, these lines will serve for my will, and in this testament I desire to include a most painful confession.

"I who have hitherto dared all, and braved all, am now stung with remorse. I have committed a fearful crime—there is no name for it. I must begin to expiate this crime, by exposing it to the eye that will read it; this, and——"

At this part, the moisture had stained and perforated the parchment, rendering some words illegible; but Madame Perrin, more and more excited and bewildered by the impulse of an irrepressible curiosity, continued to pronounce the incoherent words as though they had formed a complete sense:

"I ought—— but——resolved—— at night——I had stolen up to——a maniac——but so beautiful ——and——also——horrible to tell——at day-break ——then——carried away——the——chest——has haunted me every where, * * * *

"Returned in——my daughter——the mother still mad, and not knowing * * * *

I have taken * * * * *

——she must not be informed——and only when she shall——for reasons of mine——and——give the name of Bruyere to my daughter * *"

The parchment fell from Madame Perrin's hand.

This new and frightful shock, for a moment, restored, so to speak, her mind's equilibrium, in the same manner as a monument, disturbed from its basis by one deep oscillation, is for a moment reseated in its bed by an opposite one, until a final shock crumbles it with a noise.

Notwithstanding the broken sense of these half eaten words, Perrin Martin soon understood their meaning. Thus then, a monster smitten with the beauty of this unhappy woman, had taken advantage of her helpless state of insanity, and Bruyere was

the fruit of this awful crime, and she, Perrin Martin, had been made a mother without being conscious of it, or remembering it afterwards.

At this terrible disclosure, the motherly heart of this poor woman experienced one only feeling—it was an immense, a divine joy:—a daughter was born to her—that daughter was there—she could fold her to her bosom.

"Thus," cried she, opening her arms to Bruyere: "just now, I felt I was becoming mad; now I no longer fear. Come, come, my child, you restore me to reason."

And it was true what she said; for there are situations in which a mother will not go mad, and does not.

"You! my mother!" exclaimed Bruyere amazedly, for she was too pure and candid to have seen through the detestable meaning of the fragment which her mother had read so wildly.

"Yes, your mother! I am your mother!" said Madame Perrin sobbing, and covering Bruyere with tears and kisses, "never mind the rest. You are my daughter; what more do we want? Great God! and I who was just now saying I should have been so happy to have had a daughter and a son to adore. I had a son already—Oh! a worthy son! how you will love your brother!"

"A mother!—a brother!" muttered Bruyere, returning her mother tear for tear, kiss for kiss, and joy for joy.

"On a sudden Perrin Martin started, and whispered to Bruyere, whom she held folded in her arms:

"Somebody is calling you."

"Me, mother?"

"Yes, listen—"

And truly indeed there was a noise of horses' feet, trailing swords, and heavy boots, together with shouts and cries, and through this noise, which the strong emotion of the mother and daughter had till then prevented them from hearing, the shrill and pompous voice of Beaucadet resounded above all:

"We want Bruyere," said the officer, "we want her in the name of the law, which every one is supposed to know. Where is Bruyere?—I am come to arrest her."

It is impossible to describe the wild, loving, motherly strain, with which Perrin Martin, on hearing these words, pressed her daughter to her bosom, as she squatted down in the angle of the two walls of the bake-house, which threw out a deep shade at that spot.

"Arrest Bruyere?" cried the good and lusty Robin; "are you mad, Monsieur Beaucadet? arrest this poor little thing? and why, pray? She is the Providence of the whole country round!"

"That's true," repeated the farm-servants; "arrest this poor girl indeed, why so?"

"Because she is accused of infanticide," answered Beaucadet in a peremptory tone, and splitting his words as usual.

"What are you singing about?" resumed La Robin, "you are speaking your old jargon."

"In plain words then, you silly dunce," resumed Beaucadet disdainfully, "she is charged with killing her child."

Here two terrific cries were heard from behind the angle of the bake-house.

Just as Beaucadet was running up in that direction followed by his *gensdarme*, Bruyere, as quick as lightning, tore herself from her mother's arms, and with a bound clearing the bake-house, leapt from that height into the pond.

All this was done in less time than it takes to write it.

When Beaucadet, accompanied by his soldiers and the farm servants, reached the angle between the two walls the prominence of which had hidden the fatal action of Bruyere, they found nobody there but Perrin Martin.

The wretched mother, her head lying upon a stone, her arms stiffened, her eyes fixed and half closed, her teeth set, had become a prey to a fearful nervous fit.

"Dame Perrin," cried La Robin, sinking on her knees beside her to assist her whilst the *gensdarme* surrounded her.

"La Robin! help!" suddenly exclaimed a voice from the other side of the old bake-house.

This was one of the carters who, on hearing the noise of Bruyere's body falling into the water, had run to the edge of the pond. "Here is one of her wooden shoes in the rushes—haste—help! help! loosen the boat—we may yet be able to save her."

* * * * *

Whilst Perrin Martin, who had lost all sense, was being conveyed into the farm, the boat was unmoored, the pond gone over and searched in every part by La Robin, the carters, and the *gensdarme*.

But the body of Bruyere was no where to be found.

La Robin sobbed aloud, and carried off as a precious relic the little wooden shoe of the young girl; then, suddenly recollecting herself, she said to the carter:

"What fools we are to cry—a *charmed* creature like her cannot die. We shall see her again."

* * * * *

Monsieur Beaucadet, after drawing up an account of the suicide, got on horseback and returned to the Castle of Count Duriveau to carry him the fatal tidings.

When they had ridden a few paces, the old soldier, who had several times shown his impatience that day at the ludicrous pomposity of Beaucadet, pointed to the quartermaster and whispered to his comrade:

"I saw it plainly just now—he was weeping when he mounted his horse. So much the better; I always suspected him to be more silly than ill-natured."

CHAPTER XVI.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

WHILST the foregoing events were enacting at the farm of Grand-Genevre, other scenes were taking place at the cottage of *Sablomere*, the residence of Mrs. Wilson.

On their return home, after that untoward hunting day, Mrs. Wilson and her daughter, sad, mournful, and dejected, had sought their apartment without any thought of dinner; whilst Monsieur Alcide Dumolard, scarcely recovered from the fright after the bold and audacious attack of Bamboche, did not by any means share in the indifference shown by his sister and niece in respect to the repast; lolling back in his arm-chair, by the side of a very snug fire, he partook of an excellent dinner, asserting that so many different shocks—especially the grief he felt at the loss of his purse—had sharpened his appetite prodigiously.

Yielding to her mother's entreaties, Raphaela Wilson had just lain down; at the head of the bed sat Mademoiselle Isabeau, her maid; she was under thirty, not pretty, but her face was delicate, expressive, and intelligent; her hair magnificent, her eyes sparkling; she had a small hand, a pretty foot, and an elegant shape, which was set off with a neat black gown, exquisitely made. Mademoiselle Isabeau appeared both surprised and grieved at the gloom and affliction of her two mistresses. But on a signal from Mrs. Wilson she left the apartment.

The mother and daughter were now by themselves.

Mrs. Wilson had laid aside her riding-dress to put on a cachmere wrapper edged with a pale rose lace; a pliant tissue which betrayed the fine contour of that charming frame.

Seated at the side of her daughter's bed, she held one of her hands in her own with a look of tenderness. The lovely face of Raphaela, usually so delicate and rosy, was then so greatly altered that, had it not been for the feverish light of her large blue eyes and the dark chesnut of her hair, the pallor of her cheeks might have mingled with the snowy whiteness of the lace and cambric of her little night-cap.

This very young girl and this young mother, or rather these two sisters thus seen in a group, presented a delightful picture; a soft light shed a partial ray through the chamber, which was furnished with costly tapestry, and impregnated with that slight degree of perfume which constantly emanates from the presence of elegant and fashionable women.

For the first time, since their return from the hunt, Mrs. Wilson and her daughter were alone.

"Sweet love—you seem in pain?" said Mrs. Wilson to Raphaela.

The young girl answered with a painful sigh, accompanied by a look laden with tears.

Mrs. Wilson took between her hands her daughter's head, which was resting on her shoulder, and kissed her several times, saying:

"So you suffer, my angel,—what you? Oh! hitherto I have never known what hatred was,—but he who should cause you the slightest grief should be pursued by me with a terrible, an implacable revenge——"

In speaking of the hatred she should feel Mrs. Wilson's arch and lively face was altogether changed: her eyes, usually so merry and serene, shone with a sullen glare; her mouth, so expansive with smiles, was contracted; the veins of her forehead were swollen; in fine, the expression of her countenance appeared for a moment so threatening to Raphaela, that she exclaimed in alarm:

"Do n't hurt him, mamma; I love him so dearly."

On hearing this exclamation, which betokened an incurable passion for Viscount Scipio, Mrs. Wilson, suddenly buried her face in her hands, and burst into tears.

"Mother, dearest mother; I give you pain," cried the maiden, flinging her arms round her mother's neck; "oh, how mean, how wretched am I; perhaps he loves me no longer, whilst I am breaking your heart."

"Loves you no longer!" cried Mrs. Wilson, wiping off her tears with her hand, "loves you no longer!" and her pale cheeks flushed with indignation. "You!—to bear such a slight—you—beautiful among the beautiful: you—beautiful beyond all idea," cried Mrs. Wilson, hurried away by the pride of motherly love.

"Love you no more! he," said she after a moment's silence. "But you do n't know what it has cost me to——"

She paused: hurried away by her first impulse, she was about disclosing to her daughter a secret, so she made haste to add.

"No, you do n't know all the anxiety this suit has cost me. Compose yourself; be comforted, my beloved."

"Alas! my dear mother, since our departure from Paris we have been affianced. Yet during this day's hunt, you saw it yourself, no attention—a few vain civilities; he hardly seemed to notice me: constantly absent, indifferent; and yet even that indifference—what is it, by the side of that horrible scene in which he showed, as he ever does, so much courage and disdain! Oh! that poor country girl! he loves her; and therefore it is he loves me no longer. He loves her, and she killed her child!" cried Raphaela, with undefinable hatred, jealousy, and despair.

Then bursting into tears, she fell upon her mother's neck to hide her face.

"Oh! pity me, despise me," she continued, "in spite of all, I love him still, perhaps more,—for never did he seem so handsome to me as when, alone, so young, so weak, so daring, he braved the fury of those peasants.—Yes, mother, curse me," added Raphaela; and turning towards her mother, her lovely face suffused with tears, she extended her supplicating hands, saying again, "Curse me, for you know not all."

Mrs. Wilson sat up suddenly in her seat, and questioned her daughter with a keen and anxious eye.

"I have abused your tenderness—your unlimited confidence," resumed Raphaela dejectedly.

Mrs. Wilson's first impulse on hearing these words was to shudder and draw back, and let go her daughter's hands; then blushing for having doubted her daughter's rectitude even for a moment, she said to her:—

You—abuse my confidence? I do n't believe you, poor darling."

These words were uttered with so serene a smile, that Raphaela was stunned and overwhelmed.

"No, you have not abused my confidence, dearest. According to your habit, your good and candid heart is exaggerating some little fault—as you exaggerate Scipio's coldness. However, naughty child," added Mrs. Wilson, smiling, and putting her cheek to her daughter's, "you will make me as big a coward as yourself; for, a moment ago, when you exclaimed: '*he loves me no more!*' I trembled. To make me distrust the power of your beauty, and the adorable influence of your mind and heart! Come, my dear, let me close your eyes with kisses, since they are so blind, and misjudging of Scipio's love."

And she pressed her rosy lips to the eyelids of Raphaela.

For the first time in her life the young girl was painfully surprised at her mother's language.

The confidence, the placidity shown by Mrs. Wilson after the painful events of the day, filled her daughter with astonishment and alarm.

"Forgive me, mother," said she embarrassed, "if I am surprised to hear you express yourself so lightly as to all that has happened to-day."

Mrs. Wilson interrupted her daughter, and said to her in a tone of serious tenderness:

"Listen to me, my beloved: we are two sisters; I will speak to you in the language of a wife, for you will soon become the wife of the man you adore. You see, my dear child, you must take the world as it is. You deplore the indifference, the coldness of Scipio. How can it be helped? he belongs to the time, and affects like other men of the day a careless disregard of every tender feeling. He would look upon the eager attentions of a betrothed as ridiculous; and would feel he played the part of a country swain if he loaded you with his affectionate solicitude. But he loves you more than he seems to do; I must then take his part—I who know your worth—and protect him against your fatal misgivings. You made choice of Scipio, and you loved him so fondly, that you nearly sank beneath it. He has asked you in marriage, by his father. It was not your small portion which could tempt him; the wreck of my fortune is so very small; and your uncle's property is all invested in a life estate."

"Mother!"

"I know that all these reasons which you force me to mention, are pitiful and hateful my beloved; but since you want a proper reliance on yourself, I am bound to go into these particulars, however repugnant to our feelings."

"Alas! mother, this day, this sad and miserable day, I have had something else to grieve for besides Scipio's inattention."

"I understand you; you are thinking of that cruel exposure—the discovery of that poor babe. Here again, my dearest girl, I must speak frankly to you as a sister would—as a friend—or rather, like a mother, laying aside all vain reserves, all fal-

lacious prudery, because I want to open your eyes, and not to deceive you. Listen then to me. Last year Scipio was here, alone with his father; he did not yet know you. Amidst the idleness of a country residence, having met this young girl, he paid her some court, showed her some kind attention, flattered her. She was vain, and foolish. She must have listened, and what followed you know. Now, in a moral point of view, it was wrong, very wrong; but I must not disguise from you that according to the opinion of the world — of that world in which you and I live, Scipio's fault is what is called a youthful peccadillo; if to-morrow all Paris were to know that Viscount Scipio had seduced this poor country girl, not one noble door would be closed against him, and no man, no woman of any influence in the world would qualify in the least the usual reception they gave him; nay more, my child: not one mother, not one father, would refuse him on that account a daughter in marriage. All this, I clearly see, rather astonishes you, my dearest; but by speaking to you at present in the language which when once married you will constantly hear, afterwards by showing you the reality of things, I am only seeking to console and comfort you, and to destroy an idea fatal to your peace of mind."

"So, mamma," said Raphaela in a faltering voice, whilst she also turned pale and shivered from head to foot, "so in the world there is no pity for the young girl who has been seduced, deserted: so in the world there is no blame, no reprobation for the seducer: every one offers him his hand as usual; whilst for the victim there is nothing but indifference and contempt."

"My sweet darling, all this is, doubtless, very cruel, unjust, and deplorable; but what is to be done? such is the world. That painful scene we saw just now, is therefore, as you now perceive, not so sadly important as you at first imagined. Do you allude to your future happiness? the importance still decreases; for a year ago Scipio did not know you; and I say again, he was certainly wrong to seduce this girl: but after all, why was she so weak? why had she not sufficient virtue, sufficient courage to resist? It is a merited punishment for——"

"Oh! this is too much," cried Raphaela, interrupting her mother; "I too am too base! To hear all these things, and be silent: it is scandalous!"

Then, turning to Mrs. Wilson with a look almost frantic, she said to her in a voice of deep agony:

"Mother, you must not speak in this manner of girls who have been frail."

"Raphaela, dearest angel, what ails you? How you shiver; how you look at me!"

"I tell you, my mother, we must forgive and take pity on poor girls who have been seduced."

"You grow paler; you terrify me."

"Pity—oh! pity indeed, those unfortunates who have had neither the virtue nor the courage to resist Scipio; do you hear me, mother?"

And here that young girl's voice was broken with her sobs.

"Raphaela, cheer up; be composed."

"God punishes you, mother."

"Punishes me?"

"For the little girl that Scipio seduced was poor and friendless," resumed Raphaela with a look of frightful irony; "and therefore you said, as the world will say—what matter!—contempt for the victim—glory to the seducer.

"Raphaela!"

"Her child is dead,—perhaps she will die herself; what matter, such a creature? A youthful peccadillo of Viscount Scipio's. That's what you said, and God punishes you, mother."

"My God! my God!"

"Echo of a selfish, heartless world, you were pitiless towards the poor country girl. I tell you that God punishes you in your child, mother."

"What say you?"

"I say that I too have been as guilty—nay, more guilty still than this wretched creature: for I am not lonely and forsaken like her; I have a tender and beloved mother, whom I have never left since childhood. Well! that mother—so tender and beloved—I have deceived."

"No more, no more!"

"I have shamefully abused her confidence."

"You know not what you say: you are raving, Raphaela; recover yourself."

"No, no! I do not rave," cried the girl almost delirious; "but I may go mad—unless I die of shame."

"Of shame!"

"For I, too, could not resist the Viscount."

"Miserable girl!"

"What matter? a youthful peccadillo of Viscount Scipio's, the world will say, will it not, mother?" muttered the heart-broken girl, whose spirits were completely spent.

And, hiding her face in her hands, she fell back fainting on the bed.

CHAPTER XVII.

INDULGENCE.

SOME time had elapsed since the late lamentable confessions. Raphaela and her mother remained silent, mournful, and dejected.

Mrs. Wilson, leaning on the arm of a long chair, seemed to be buried in the deepest grief; she fixed upon her daughter a look of acute sadness, pity, love, and forgetfulness.

Raphaela, pale, with her head drooping, her hands clasped on her lap, seemed listless; now and then a large tear would roll in silent anguish down her colourless cheek, which was as cold and white as marble.

"Rhaphaela!" suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Wilson, "listen to me, my dear child."

When she heard this speech, fraught as it was with infinite indulgence and tenderness, the young girl started and kissed her mother's hands whilst the tears fell fast upon them.

"Raise yourself—be calm, my love; I have myself much to do to conquer my feelings. Let us take courage—let us speak of you—let us speak of each other."

"I attend to you, mother," said Raphaela.

"We are, you know, two lonely, unprotected women; we have none to advise us but ourselves; for we can expect no assistance from your uncle. It is for us alone, dearest, to resolve on the future course we have to take. A few minutes back, your apprehensions as to Scipio's love seemed to me ill-founded; but now they seem more foolish still; for now I can see through his apparent coldness: it was forcibly adopted as a blind for both our sakes."

"Ah! mother," answered Raphaela, dejectedly, "at the sight of that poor little dead child, which was his, the eye of Scipio remained tearless and haughty; that terrifies me—it makes me distrust his heart; and yet I feel I love him still. How dreadful to think of! If he should break his word—if contempt——"

"Contempt! for you?" exclaimed the too fond mother; "no—no, depend upon it, my child; Scipio will keep his promise—he will keep it because he loves you—because no human power can prevent this marriage."

"Ah! mother, you do not know the inflexibility of his character."

Raphaela's anxiety, the increasing disorder of her features, rent the heart of Mrs. Wilson, and induced her to reveal a secret which modesty and motherly love had hitherto kept close.

After a momentary pause, she said to Raphaela:—

"My dear child, you must be comforted; and to pacify and restore your confidence, I will prove to you that nothing can obstruct this union; no, not even the will of Scipio himself. I will show you, my love, that in order to secure this marriage, I have performed, I may say, a miracle."

"You, mother?"

"Yes; and therefore, you see, any thing less than a miracle will now be mere child's play. You are astonished; I will say all,—not without regret,—for I did not intend you should ever know it."

She paused again, and shortly after resumed with pride:—

"But why should I blush to own it? Listen:—you know, when I left Paris, I quitted it in hopes of recovering in England some disputed claims on your father's property still remaining to us; the sum was a considerable one, and in these times of selfish cupidity, was calculated to confirm your future happiness. When I arrived in England, chance placed me in communication with Sir Francis Dudley, who had an interest in the same claims. Sir Francis was a noble character—a chivalrous one. We met often. Well, my child, what was the consequence? First to our transactions of business succeeded the keenest esteem and friendship; then a sentiment more tender still—which made me happy and proud, for I shared it; and felt I was worthy of the man who inspired it in me: Sir Francis was free—so was I. But what now avails all these recollections? all is now only a vain and happy dream."

"A dream, mother—why only a dream?"

"Let us speak of you, my darling. During my absence, I used to receive every day a letter from you; all at once your letter ceased to come,—your aunt writes to me instead,—the news of your illness lights upon me like a thunder-stroke—I return to Paris—you were dying."

"Oh, mother! you loved—and yet you came; now I understand the greatness of the sacrifice you sustained on my account."

"My child, that is not all. When I arrived you told me of your fatal passion. To restore you to life, I promised to marry you to Scipio; at this blissful hope you recovered, and were saved! But now it was necessary to accomplish the rash promise I had made in the delirium of grief. Either I must unite you to Scipio, or see you relapse into that consuming and deadly grief from which I had rescued you. Alas! I knew not then, my beloved, what I had engaged to do."

"How so? my marriage?"

"Attend—a friend of mine, a lady—was intimately acquainted with Scipio's father, Count Duriveau. After a long conversation with this lady, I was given up to despair: your marriage was impossible; the Count wanted to marry his son to an heiress with a fortune of three millions of francs; and, as I had observed to my friend, that Scipio's consent was at least necessary."

"Well! mother?" cried Raphaela.

"She answered, that if I knew the Count, I should know that for a man with his iron will, *to wish a thing was to have it.*"

"Scipio consented, then, to that union!" cried the girl, sorrowfully. "He was already deceiving me!"

"No, no, he did not; but doubtless he would not at first enter into collision with his father's wishes."

"O mother! mother!" muttered the young girl, borne down with so many proofs of kindness and love.

"I wished to know Count Duriveau personally," replied Mrs. Wilson; "I wanted to judge with my own eyes that formidable man who, without knowing it, held in his hands my daughter's life. I was introduced to him. Three months after this interview, Count Duriveau, after suddenly breaking off the intended match, came to ask me if you would accept Scipio for a husband."

"And how, mother, was this sudden change brought about?"

"Because I had captured the heart of Count Duriveau."

"Of Count Duriveau!" cried Raphaela.

"He loves me to madness; for after two months' assiduous courtship, he entreated me to accept his hand and fortune. I accepted his offer."

"What you, my mother?" said Raphaela astonished.

"Yes; but on one condition: that your marriage with Scipio should be celebrated at the same time."

"Oh! mother, mother," cried Raphaela; "so then you have renounced the love you remember with so much happiness and pride: you are about to wed a man whom you do not esteem, whom you hate, perhaps—and all this for me."

"Raphaela," replied the mother, "fear nothing on my account. But tell me, do you now believe, my dearest girl, that I have succeeded in performing a miracle by inducing Count Duriveau to solicit your hand for his son? And will you not believe that I can complete what I have so happily begun?"

"I believe you, I believe you, my beloved mother," cried Raphaela interrupting her.

And the beautiful face of the young girl was lighted up with beams of hope and happiness, as she flung herself upon her mother's neck.

A gentle tap was heard at the door of the outer room.

"Who is there?" said Mrs. Wilson.

"Me, madam," answered Isabeau, outside the door.

"What do you want, Isabeau?"

"Here is a letter, madam, from Count Duriveau; it is very urgent, and the messenger is to wait for an answer."

"Come in, Isabeau."

Mademoiselle Isabeau came in, gave the letter to Mrs. Wilson, and then went in to wait on Raphaela, leaving the lady to read it.

"I thought it would be so: he fears the effect of this morning's discovery; he implores me to intercede for his son, and to induce Raphaela to pardon him. But what sad event is this he alludes to? he will tell me to-morrow, for fear of giving me too great a shock after all I have suffered this day. Well, I must go and answer him."

Mrs. Wilson then left her apartment and went into a small private room to write her note. She had only just concluded her letter to the Count, when suddenly, pale, half-naked, and with bewildering looks, Raphaela rushed into the chamber.

"She is dead—dead," cried the girl.

"My God! what 's the matter, Raphaela? what do you mean?"

"That young girl!—the mother of the child!—is dead!"

"What do you say?"

"She drowned herself!—they went to arrest her!"

"How do you know this?"

"One of the Count's people told it to Isabeau."

"That must be the event he alludes to in his letter," muttered the lady.

"Oh! mother! we are punished. This death is an omen," said Raphaela.

And she sunk exhausted with alarm into her mother's embrace.*

* If the English reader should object to this frank exposure of the manners of the day in another country,—not very different from our own in respect to the *light morality* of the great,—let him remember that "Rodorick Random," by Smollett, and "The Sisters," by Dr. Dodd, are quite as frank in their exposure of this profligacy of the times, and *do not relate to our neighbours.*—*Translator's note.*

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE DINNER.

Let us now cast a retrospective glance on the events which were passing at the Castle of Tremblay, during the evening when Bruyere attempted her own life in the pond at the farm.

During that same evening it was the lovely Raphaela confessed her fault and her shame to her mother.

On his return home, Count Duriveau had to regret at once the absence of Mrs. Wilson and her daughter, who had intended, as well as Monsieur Alcide Dumolard, to go after the hunt, and dine at the Castle of Tremblay; to the keen disappointment caused by the absence of the charming widow, was added the tedium of receiving several country neighbours, likewise invited to this dinner, and whose invitations there had been no time to put off.

That tedium was, however, accompanied with some mitigatory circumstances; those neighbours were rich landowners, or traders who had grown fat by successful speculations, and a few lawyers who had retired from their profession after making their fortunes; they were all of them influential electors; now the year before, a few of Duriveau's friends, belonging to a certain political clique, had said to him:

"The times are serious: these detestable principles, *radical, social, and democratic*, are spreading with frightful rapidity among the labouring classes; it is urgent that some party, consisting of energetic and determined men, who will hold together, should overawe and crush those anarchical desires, which would lead us headlong to a republic, to popular violence, and to natural bankruptcy. As a large landed proprietor, you have the greatest interest in the maintenance of peace and order. Be one of us, become a member of the house instead of M. de la Levrasse, who means well, but has no authority and weight; begin your *canvass*—the king's government will support you, you will be certainly elected and then you can vote with us for the preservation of the best possible system."

These tenders flattered the pride of Count Duriveau, and his haughty, unyielding disposition; he followed the counsels of his friends most zealously, began to draw near several electors who had influence among the party he wished to belong to, received them frequently at his table; and the din-

ner which he had invited them to, on the present occasion, was to celebrate his return into Sologne.

The different incidents of the day, the kind of riot provoked by the bold insolence of Scipio, when Bruyere's child was discovered, were consequently doubly irksome to the Count, first because he feared that Raphaela Wilson, after such an exposure, would wish to break off a match by which alone his own marriage could be secured with Mrs. Wilson, and secondly because the rumour of that scandalous scene in which Scipio had been the chief actor, being once spread over the country, might produce the most deplorable effect on the Count's parliamentary projects. As for the rest, this lamentable event was as yet completely unknown to the guests who had collected together at the Castle of Tremblay.

The castle, erected towards the close of the Seventeenth century, and overlooking the delightful valley of the Sauldre, a real oasis in the midst of that barren waste, had an almost royal appearance: Count Duriveau displayed in it a prodigious splendour, and supported a prodigious establishment.

A spacious hall in which a dozen footmen were standing, with powdered hair, and attired in their rich brown liveries edged with silver lace, was first traversed by the Count's guests; they then passed into a waiting-room where the *valets-de-chambre* were stationed, then into a picture gallery which opened into the grand dining-room, magnificently gilt, and furnished in the purest style of Louis the Fourteenth.

The long green damask curtains had been let down; the candelabras and the gilt bronze lustres, glittering with wax-lights, were reflected in large mirrors beneath which, you saw enormous china vases filled with the most costly flowers.

The dinner-hour was drawing on. Count Duriveau, shaking off his painful thoughts, was doing with lofty courtesy and alone, the honours of his house, for Viscount Scipio took no part in those hospitable attentions.

The father and son presented a striking and marked contrast, even in the most trifling particulars.

The Count, although a young father, far from approving the loose and vulgar fashions of the young men of 1845, had laid aside his hunting garb, and was dressed with the nicest care and taste: he wore a light blue coat with gold buttons, a white waistcoat fitted close to his shape, which was fine and flexible like that of a young man: a black pair of pantaloons, closely fitted, exhibited his strong and elegant form, and discovered a very neat foot covered with white silk stockings; and lastly, he had on a pair of bright glazed shoes to complete his costume. We have not mentioned his large black satin cravat, spreading over a shirt beautifully embroidered, and fastened with three huge pearls, surrounded with brilliants, mounted on a leaf of green enamel. The Count, thanks to his dark hair, his lean but expressive countenance, appeared in spite of his *fifty summers*, to be five and thirty or forty at most.

We say it again, though they may seem trivial, these particulars of his costume had a significant meaning; thus, Count Duriveau would have felt he was wanting in respect to his friends or to himself, if, to dine even alone, he had not been carefully attired: for him to put on boots of an evening instead of shoes and silk stockings, would have seemed a fearful breach of good manners. It may seem a strange kind of *self-respect;* but still it was his own.

Viscount Scipio, far from imitating this ceremonious example, carried his *negligée* to excess—indulging in all that indifference, laxity, and *at your ease* which the club, the stable-yard, and the company of certain ladies of fashion had rendered habitual to him and a large number of young men.

So the costume of Scipio contrasted with his father's, in the most cutting manner: his black cravat was so small that it looked like a ribbon, and was loosely fastened round a high, stiff shirt-collar, which reached up to his ears, and left his neck almost naked; his green body coat, full at the breast, and short at the skirts, looked like a hunting jacket; a Scotch waistcoat, of unusual length and cut like a groom's, rounded over a pair of dark trousers with large blue square stripes, which hung down loosely and heavily, like those of a sailor, upon glossy boots with very high heels.

Such was the Viscount's dress, a dress whose cavalier and *at-your-ease* character was heightened by the most free-and-easy postures, by an affectation of the *rollicking blade* more easy to feel than to describe; with his shirt gaping at the breast, wide stiff cuffs turning half over his coat-sleeve, from which issued his white hand, thin and delicate as that of a sickly woman; with his soft lazy attitudes; —but we must not carry on any further the description of those shades, those nothings, those nice, faint, and imperceptible touches, which yet conspire to give to a portrait its own particular stamp.

According to custom, Scipio had entered the saloon very late. On seeing him so carelessly dressed, the Count approached and whispered to him with friendly rebuke:

"You ought to have dressed yourself with greater attention; you know that every thing is noticed in the country."

"Come, now," answered Scipio, aloud; "it is you I am ashamed of, with your tight pantaloons; you are costumed like an opera-dancer, like *Saint Leon*, like a lover in a play: during the Empire, you might have been the rival of Elleviou, in his *rôles à cuisse*, which turned the heads of those fine ladies, the relics of the Directory!'

The Count bit his lips; some new guests entered, and he was bound to receive them. The contrast we dwell upon was just as palpable in the demeanour of the two men. For the Count might now be seen standing near the chimney and talking to the men, and then leaning over the backs of the ladies' chairs to address them a few words of polished courtesy.

Whilst Scipio, leaning, or rather lolling, in a wide and deep elbow-chair, with his hands buried in his pockets, his right leg resting horizontally upon his left knee, sometimes looking at the ceiling, sometimes audibly yawning, at others, tittering and biting, he would impudently jeer and make game of those whom their evil stars brought within his reach. As for the ladies, after curiously scanning their entrance from his seat, by fixing his tortoise-shell glass to his eyelid, he did not even notice them by a single word or a bow.

Count Durivean, already deeply hurt by Scipio's conduct during that wretched day, and, moreover, irritated by the bitter taunts his son had aimed at him before Mrs. Wilson, and weary of playing the part of a young father, was manifestly wounded by the insolent affectation of Scipio, which might operate so as to alienate his electors. But so greatly did he dread the raillery of that stripling, whose insolent audacity respected no propriety at all, that he swallowed his spleen, and postponed, till the party broke up, the grave and serious explanation he proposed to have with Scipio.

The latter, still deeply immersed in his comfortable chair, descrying not far off the Count's collector, beckoned to him with his finger to come to his side.

Monsieur Laurençon, the said collector, a tall, raw-boned, tawny-skinned person, with a hard and impassible face, moved respectfully towards Scipio, and said to him:

"Do you wish for any thing, my lord?"

"Ring the bell, my worthy: I don't know what they are thinking about—they don't serve up, and I am hungry."

Monsieur Laurençon went up to the hearth and drew a long silk bell pull.

Almost immediately after, a *valet de chambre*, dressed in black, with knee-breeches and silk stockings, and gold buckles to his shoes opened the door of the saloon.

It was Martin, the son of Madam Perrin and Count Duriveau.

He was the exact image of the portrait we have seen in his mother's hands: his complexion was dark, his countenance open and sprightly, his look pensive and yet keen; but a close observer might have remarked a something in the physiognomy that was constrained and kept under, as if he felt the necessity of keeping his place in his present lot.

The Viscount made a sign to him to draw near.

Martin drew respectfully towards the Viscount—*his brother*—with an inward pang, that nothing externally revealed, but which he could not suppress.

"Well! are we going to dine to-day?" said Scipio.

"Excuse me, my lord, they are going to serve up."

"Then hurry them a little—I am hungry."

And as Martin, after bowing to Scipio, was advancing towards the door, the Viscount called him back.

"Martin! tell the butler that I drink nothing but port. Let them cool me two bottles—at the same temperature as claret—from twelve to fifteen degrees, neither more nor less."

"Yes, my lord."

"Take care," added Scipio, "to tell them to set curry and cayenne allspice close to me."

"Yes, my lord," said Martin.

Then he left the room.

The company consisted for the most part of those who say my *spouse*, and who call *lions* and *lionesses* the men and women whom they suppose to be in fashion. In the estimation of these ignorant and selfish burghers, with their vanity and adulation ludicrously wedded to their electioneering importance, Scipio's impertinence passed off for fashionable manners; his disdain and supercilious mockery enchanted and awed them at once, they always called him "*My Lord Viscount*," and laughed in chorus as soon as he spoke; which drove him beyond all patience, for, like the man in the play, *he did not think he was so pleasant*. As for the ladies, whilst they all ogled him with their eyes, they hated him; that is to say, they were dying of vexation that they were not pretty enough, and grand enough, to merit even a few polite speeches from that impertinent coxcomb!—in other words, more than one of those angry *belles* was sure to return home with a giddy head, as she thought of the pale and pretty face of Scipio; his large dark eyes, his mocking smile, which showed his charming teeth, and his little white hand which, from time to time, curled his delicate fair moustache with so indolent a grace.

Suddenly the two folds of the door leading to the saloon were opened with a clash, and Martin, in a deep-toned voice, proclaimed those sacred words:

"Monsieur le Comte, dinner is ready."

"Scipio, give your arm to Madame Chalumeau," said the Count immediately to his son, giving his own to another lady at the same time.

Scipio, true to his part of a jaded liver, never laughed; had it been otherwise, in spite of his father's gravity, he would have burst out into a roar at the unexpected name of *Chalumeau*.* But even a burst of laughter had been less insolent than the ludicrous eagerness with which Scipio sprang forward, out of his deep arm-chair, to offer his arm to Madame Chalumeau, after making her a low ironical bow.

Madame Chalumeau, the wife of one of the most influential electors, took these civilities in earnest. She was a little squat woman, fair and fatty, with hair and eyes as black as jet, having only this disparagement, that her ears were too red, her chin too close to her neck, and too many artificial herbs in her cap, which made her head as large as a bushel. As for the rest, her lips were rosy, her teeth of dazzling whiteness, and there was in her eye an expression of love and languor.

Monsieur Chalumeau, the influential elector, a tall bald-headed man, with blue spectacles, stood up starchly behind his wife, exceedingly proud to see her hanging on the arm of the young Viscount; whilst the happy Madame Chalumeau, fluttering with joy and pride beneath her dress, widely overspread with silk straps, felt her ears turn from red to scarlet, and squeezed with her firm round arm the thin arm of the Viscount as if she feared that the other women, whom she crushed with her look of triumph, were plotting together to carry off her cavalier.

"Look at the artful wretch!" said one of the lady guests, the wife of an elector of much less influence, pointing out to her husband with a look of kindling ferocity the envied, the odious Chalumeau.

"Remember, my darling, Chalumeau can command thirty-seven votes," said the husband, timidly, "and I—only eleven. His wife must needs, therefore, take the lead of you."

"For all that, if you have the misfortune to vote for the father of that spark against M. de la Levrasse, you will tell me the reason," said the lady, trembling with wrath. "I won't have your Count Duriveau for a member!" resumed she, in an angry tone.

"Nevertheless, be just and fair, my darling," answered the elector; "tell me only this: does your M. de la Levrasse give us Balthazar festivals, with servants powdered like marquises? He is as poor as a church rat, and does all our errands at Paris very carelessly; whilst if we should have for our member a Count, a man as rich as a bank director, who will send his steward to execute our little messages in the capital, it will be far more flattering, and more profitable to boot."

So saying, the poor humble elector prudently allowed his choleric rib to pass before him, and mixed with the crowd of company who were making their way to the dining-room.

* Shepherd's pipe.

CHAPTER II.

THE WINTER-GARDEN.

THE company had passed through a gallery full of ancient armour and precious weapons, to go into the dining-hall, with its white wainscots, adorned with gilt mouldings, and fine pictures of the chase of different periods.

On the table stood four large candelabras of silver chased, supported figures, likewise of silver, but tinctured by a felicitous contrast with that leaden colour peculiar to old silver metal. Each of these magnificent chandeliers, genuine pieces of workmanship, was divided into six twisted branches like vine-stalks laden with grapes and foliage, beautifully carved and engraved; these branches, as they spread apart, left in the midst of them a light basket of embossed silver, embroidered in stitches like lace, and filled with natural flowers, whose vivid colours were doubled by the reflection of the wax-lights. Here and there the rich wines of Champagne were congealing in crystal coolers of Bohemia, sparkling like rubies, supported on groups of small silver figures, and mounted on thick vine-stalks of the same metal, which after twisting round the edge of these vases like a supple garland, rounded over and crossed each other, terminating in handles elegantly carved. A sumptuous service of plate equal to and consisting with these splendid adornments, was spread over the table; and, agreeably to a new and happy custom, instead of comfortless chairs, the guests were seated in commodious elbow chairs,

enabling them to enjoy at their ease the culinary wonders of the *chef de cuisine* in the service of the Count. It is needless to say that the choicest wines, the most excellent dishes, were circulated in profusion, and that the reflection of the plate, the perfume of the flowers, the crystals sparkling with all the flames of the wax lights, lent a thousand new charms to these gastronomical enjoyments.

Count Duriveau, seated in the middle of the table, had on his right the lady of the most influential elector, and in front of him his hopeful son, Scipio, in company with the happy Madame Chalumeau and the other fair dame whose husband had ingenuously confessed (nor was he single in so doing) that he preferred to his present representative, (M. de la Levrasse, a miser of no avail, the future deputy or Count Duriveau, that opulent and hospitable host, whose board was so luxuriantly spread.

One man alone contemplated this princely luxury with a sad but secret regret—that was Martin. At the sight of that fabulous magnificence, of that exorbitant superfluity, he thought of the frightful misery of the people of the country, wasted by fatigue, sickness, and want. A horrible distress, which Count Duriveau, the proprietor of almost the whole district, might so easily have converted into comfort and plenty. *For wealth has its duties*, thought Martin, *and one must know how to make people forgive one's abundance.*

But none of these secret sentiments was visible on his immoveable face, not one of his fellow-servants showed more eagerness and smartness in waiting on the guests.

Scipio, in spite of his pretended appetite, ate but little, and that little he seasoned with spice enough to burn his palate: for his taste had been long since depraved; but he drank like a cask, and with perfect impunity. Port-wine, the strongest ever drank at a French table, could no longer intoxicate him. When he was not drinking himself, he prevailed on Madame Chalumeau to drink champagne, and impudently whispered in her ear the most audacious and broadest declarations. Poor Madame Chalumeau, afraid of being taken for a silly fool—a mere country prude, by so pretty a fellow too, began by looking prim, as she listened to his impertinent freedoms, then the charming face of Scipio, the provocation of good cheer, and the help of the champagne, brought her by degrees to smile; then gradually her eyes grew bright, her ear from scarlet became crimson; she was near bursting her straps with her soft palpitations, when she felt Scipio's boot pressed lightly on her buskin—*but she did not withdraw it.*

Count Duriveau more and more afraid of some fresh act of folly on his son's part,—for he well knew the drift of those attentions which the Viscount was lavishing on his fair neighbour,—cast at him from time to time a look of repressed anger to which Scipio responded by a look of arrogant defiance.

Suddenly the Viscount, his father, and Martin, who was standing behind his master, shuddered at a name uttered by one of the guests.

That name was *Basquine.*

That name already pronounced during the day, first by Beaucadet when reading the personal description of Bamboche, whose arm was tatooed with the name of Basquine, then by Mrs. Wilson when she had spoken of the transports which that great artist, at once the *antelope and the nightingale*, excited on the stage.

On hearing that name, Scipio's features expressed a kind of hidden satisfaction—the features of the Count a painful aversion; the features of Martin a deep and thoughtful astonishment as if that name had roused many recollections in his mind.

"We must request the Count to *edify* us on this point, since he comes from the *capital*,"—said Chalumeau.

"On what point, my dear sir?" said the Count.

"My friend Chandavoine maintains," said the influential elector, pointing to his neighbour, "that he has heard that the famous Basquine, that actress at the opera who is so much vaunted in the newspapers, was received on the footing of a friend by the ladies of the highest rank, and that she is on the most familiar terms with them."

"If we were dining at a bachelor's party, my dear Chalumeau, and you were not over nice, I might tell you, not without certain restrictions, what Basquine really is," answered the Count with a smile of bitter contempt; "but the presence of these ladies renders such a conversation altogether impossible."

"My father is becoming unwittingly the interpreter of absurd reports, sir," said Scipio, with a flaming eye, and a cheek slightly flushed,—"yes, sir, it is perfectly true that ladies of the best and highest fashion, that men of the highest functions are eager to show Mademoiselle Basquine, by the most delicate attentions, the deep and respectful admiration she inspires; and I am the more impartial on this subject," added the young scapegrace, "that I have not the honour of knowing the young lady, otherwise than as an enthusiast of her admirable talents."

The Count looked at his son with surprise; for the first time since a long period he heard him speak in serious and choice language, with a tone of earnestness, and that, on account of a woman relating to whom the most contradictory rumours prevailed. Some people considered Basquine as a model of virtue, the rarer that she was exposed like all celebrated actresses, to every snare and temptation; according to others (among whom Count Duriveau was one) Basquine was a monster of hypocrisy, depravity, libertinism and wickedness—at once a Messalina and a Cleopatra, and, like them, a sovereign not by the crown but by genius.

The Count was not the only one present who heard with astonishment the words and the accent of Scipio, and who strove to read in his face the cause of this singular departure from his usual scoffing.

Fixing on the Viscount an attentive glance, Martin had betrayed a kind of melancholy surprise, on hearing the youth express his admiration of the talent and character of Basquine, in terms so serious, he who was at all other times so insolently disdainful and jeering.

By the manner in which his father considered him, Scipio blamed himself for having been unintentionally surprised in a first impulse of feeling, and for having spoken a language, simple enough for any one but him, but in his case so eccentric, that it must have been noticed, the Viscount was thinking of the means of obliterating the impression which his remarks on the subject of Basquine, had made upon the Count. Madame Chalumeau came to his assistance most opportunely.

"How ardently you defend that *actress*," said she in an under tone, and somewhat sharply.

Scipio on hearing the tender reproach, exculpated himself triumphantly; for, after a few explanatory observations, the cloud which had for a moment darkened the brow of the jealous dame suddenly vanished, and soon after the buskin which, during the eulogium on Basquine, had hastily withdrawn from under Scipio's boot, timidly returned of its own accord and resumed its former place.

Monsieur Chalumeau, in spite of his blue spectacles, saw nothing, and suspected as little; he had found means to seat himself at the table by the side of his friend Chandavoine, both stuffing themselves with whatever was offered them, and then trying to guess what they had eaten, the whimsical names given to every dish by the steward being inscrutable enigmas for such profane diners-out.

The two friends had accepted at a venture the

portions of two new dishes which they were greedily relishing, when Chalumeau was roused from his venturesome conjectures by the voice of Scipio, who called to him from the other end of the table.

This was the cause:

After having pressed, several times, Madame Chalumeau's foot, Scipio, perceiving that his important overtures were well received, had leaned over towards his fair neighbour, and looking at her too significantly, and in a provoking manner, had whispered a few words to her. The Viscount probably went too far; for the poor woman, in spite of so many circumstances conspiring to turn her head, was unable to suppress a gesture of indignant rebuke.

"Well!" said Scipio tittering: "since you refuse me, I will complain aloud to your husband."

This effrontery amazed Madame Chalumeau, although she could not believe him to be so presumptuously bold as to do what he threatened; but judge of the poor creature's alarm and consternation when she heard Scipio repeat in a loud voice:

"I say, Monsieur Chalumeau!"

At this appeal, the hum of every private conversation ceased in a moment; every eye was directed towards Chalumeau and the Viscount, who continued:

"I am going to make a complaint to you, Monsieur Chalumeau."

"What can it be, my lord Viscount?" answered the elector in a stifled voice, blushing all over at this sudden address.

"I declare to you that Madame Chalumeau refuses every thing I ask her to do. I want you to give her a good scolding," added Scipio with inflexible gravity.

"What, my love!" said the doctor to his wife: "does my lord Viscount ask you to do any thing?"

And poor Chalumeau's forehead was steeped in perspiration, so much so that his spectacles were dampened; the unhappy man was looking through a blue mist; confusion and embarrassment clogged up his throat; still he made an effort and added:

"If my lord Viscount does you the honour to ask any thing of you, and you refuse him, it is not acting properly, my love."

"There! do you hear that, madam?" said Scipio, turning towards the poor dame, who felt herself dying beneath her straps.

"Then, addressing her husband, Scipio added:

"Come, Monsieur Chalumeau, tell your lady she must not refuse me; she will probably listen to you: and besides, if you knew what I asked of her!"

"I can pretty well guess, my lord Viscount; it can only be something very amiable, and——"

Count Duriveau was in mortal agony; he interrupted Chalumeau, and said to him, with an affable smile:

"I will tell you, my dear sir, what my son is indiscreet enough to entreat so earnestly Madame Chalumeau to do, and what she is perfectly right to refuse him, until she has your consent; he is asking her for your vote at the coming election."

"How, my lord Count," cried the influential elector; "but you know full well that my vote and that of my friends are yours already."

Then addressing his wife in a tone of formal and very earnest reproachfulness:

"Why, my love, I have repeated to you a hundred times, that Count Duriveau is our candidate: we will have no other; M. de la Levrasse won't suit us any longer. Then why did you not answer yes, at once, to my lord Viscount? Allow me to tell you, it was very wrong of you."

"True, my love, I was wrong," returned the timid dame with modest humility.

Count Duriveau saw by the sarcastic expression of Scipio's features that the libertine was going to reply to Monsieur Chalumeau's sententious remarks; so, desiring to break off a bad joke which might rob him of one of his chief electors, and seeing that dinner was nearly at an end, the Count exclaimed:

"Gentlemen, since we are speaking of elections, a grave subject for *serious* men, for politicians like us, allow me to propose a toast, which will, I hope, be welcome to all."

Then, turning half-round towards Martin, who, standing behind his *master* to wait upon his orders, was a witness to the whole scene, the Count said to him as he extended his glass:

"Give me some Cyprus wine."

Martin took a glass decanter off a tray, and poured out the Count a glass of that nectar, with its tincture of topaz liquid.

"Gentlemen," said the Count, rising, "let us drink to the *landlords!* the sole, the true, the only true safeguards of peace and order: the only, the true representatives of our fine country of France, since it is they who nominate her legislators."

These words, delivered by the Count in a strong, sonorous voice, were hailed with acclamation, amidst the loud jingle of the glasses against the table.

A few moments after, the Count rose up from table, offering his arm to the lady who sat beside him.

Scipio followed his father's example and gave his arm to the fair Chalumeau; she thought the Count very bold, very impudent, very rakish; but alas! these evil qualities were very far from inducing in her a prudent distrust for the pretty *monster*. She even felt a secret admiration, as she thought of the boldness, the spirit, the composure with which the Viscount had dared, in open company, complain to Chalumeau of his wife's *refusals*. "What audacity! what presence of mind!" thought she; "and he so young, too! so charming!" Then to turn her head altogether, there was the dazzling glare of that princely magnificence, for which Scipio seemed so naturally born; then the stripling who, to gratify his whim as a jaded rake, and his fancy as a libertine, *thought it odd*, as he said, to lead astray the virtue of that silly woman, who was besides sufficiently inviting—Scipio, we say, had suddenly changed his manner, apologised for his precipitancy, and ascribed it to the impetuous ardour of a passion as sudden as it was violent.

In a word, when the Viscount left the table, he felt with triumphant derision, the imprudent dame press her arm energetically against his; and he perceived that the jet black eyes of his *victim*, in general so brilliant, were now dimmed with confusion and languishing tenderness.

"Come! now," said the Viscount, in her ear, "my father and those gentlemen are going to talk about politics while they take their coffee in the winter garden. All those women yonder frighten me with their ugly looks and stupid talk—and the fault is yours. Why are you so sprightly and handsome? Let us leave them to themselves and go and look at the aviary—it is delightful."

"Oh! no, surely not, my lord Viscount—oh! as to that—never!"

"How cruel you are! if you were to ask me that—or even something to affect my honour—such as to come to my chamber, for instance, I would allow it immediately! So you see, you do n't love me as I love you," said Scipio, with bitter melancholy.

"But—think—if they should discover us——"

"Have no fear—the aviary is at the end of the hot-house leading to the winter garden. Nothing can be more natural than to go there. Only we

shall be a little more to ourselves; and solitude with you must be happiness."

At this delicate insinuation, the too sensitive Chalumeau, looked down, her heart beat violently beneath her straps, and Scipio, whom she could not see, gave her an insolent mocking look, which was his mode of appreciation.

During this rapid discourse, Scipio and his fair neighbour, like the rest of the company, had passed through a billiard-room, the three glass doors of which opened into a spacious hot-house forming a winter garden, at that time lighted with lamps of rustic wood, furnished with wax-lights, and filled with bending plants, such as geraniums with ivy leaves, vervains, cactuses, and every kind of polypetalous plants. The winding paths, paved in variegated mosaic, were lined with enormous thickets of camelias, rododendrons, mongolias, heath-flowers, &c. At the bottom of the garden, stood a grotto built with small stones covered over with moss, and almost hidden by an entanglement of wild flowers which formed a net-work above the moss.

One of the doors in this garden was exactly opposite that of the billiard-room, and opened into a hot-house shaped like a gallery and terminated in a rotunda, in the centre of which arose a magnificent aviary of the rarest birds, such as could live only in the atmosphere of tropical plants.

Coffee had been served up in the winter garden; some ladies were walking about, others were conversing, seated on fanciful rustic benches at the end of the grotto, lighted by variegated Chinese lamps, whilst the gentlemen had generally collected round Count Duriveau, and, standing like him, were sipping with keen relish the burning mocha.

That fine autumnal night was so mild, that several windows of the winter garden, one side of which looked into the park, had been opened; the dinner having lasted till late, the moonlight reflected afar upon the river, surrounded by grass, which meandered through an immense down, covered here and there with woods of enormous trees.

A large thicket of shrubs, lining the principal *façade* of the winter garden, rose up to the ledge of one of the open windows, at which Count Duriveau and his guests stood conversing, while Martin waited on them with a tray, containing small decanters of rich liquors.

All at once Martin started.

By the light of the moon, which fell on the tufted foliage of the thicket of shrubs under the window, Martin had just seen for a moment the head of Bête-Puante, the poacher, which after a signal of intelligence to Martin, had dived back into the thicket.

Bête-Puante had just arrived out of breath from the farm of the Grand Genévrier, where he had gone by a secret route, at the same time as Beaucadet and his *gendarmes*.

At this sudden appearance of the poacher, whom he knew to harbour so many feelings of aversion to the Count, Martin started so violently that he shook the tray he was holding, and one of the bottles fell off and was broken.

The Count, hearing the noise, whilst speaking to one of his guests with much animation, turned towards Martin, and said to him harshly:

"You awkward fellow, mind what you are about."

"Excuse me, my lord, but——"

The Count interrupted Martin with a haughty look:

"Enough—since you are not able to hold a tray, "lay it down on the table, and await my orders."

Martin made no reply, set the tray down on one of the rustic tables, which were spread about the winter garden, and stood waiting a few steps from his master.

Martin's face soon resumed its wonted composure, and he had sufficient self-command to overcome his new fears and anguish when he saw the Count continue the conversation, leaning on the ledge of that open casement, beneath which lay the close thicket wherein the poacher was ensconced.

CHAPTER III.

COFFEE AFTER DINNER.

Count Duriveau, in his colloquy with his future constituents, became more bitter and violent; for the discourse, running first upon politics, had afterwards almost naturally turned upon a subject which he never entered into without the most lively feelings of animosity: *the contempt and aversion he felt for the vices of the poorer classes.*

Leaning against the side of the window, the Count experienced some relief as he felt the night air cooling his heated brain,—heated by the irascible hatred he gave vent to during the discussion.

"Indeed, gentlemen," said he, "during my youth my heart was as kind, and kinder, than any other person's; my hand was ever open, and I wept easily. I believed in the virtues and unmerited misfortunes of the mob. I thought of and pitied your fathers without work, they who were the sole support of a young family of children and a bed-ridden wife. I thought of and pitied your starving beggars who had been forty-eight hours without food. I thought of and pitied your destitute widows, who were driven to beg by night with an infant at their breast and leading another by the hand. I thought of and pitied the tears of poor forsaken orphans, wandering through the streets of Paris. I thought of and pitied the seduced girl left and abandoned without help."

Then shrugging his shoulders with pitiless disdain, the Count added:

"I used to bewail those *touching* misfortunes, gentlemen—what a green booby I was! The father without work was an infamous drunkard turned out of his work-room; the beggar who had fasted for forty-eight hours, had just come from the wine-shop; the disconsolate widow had borrowed the little innocents to excite charity; the poor little orphans of twelve years old divided my alms with other little blackguards of their age, to whom they had long since prostituted themselves, and the seduced and abandoned young girl had just been turned out of a brothel! what a lesson for me."

It would be impossible to describe the accent with which the Count uttered these words so full of gall, and which produced, of necessity, a lively impression on his auditory.

"His lordship is perfectly right," said Monsieur Chalumeau, whose eyes as usual were seeking for his wife, who had disappeared shortly before with Scipio; "his lordship is perfectly right: we are always the dupes of our good nature; to do good to such wretches is only making them ungrateful."

And then the worthy man sipped his coffee with grave precision.

"Either the misery of the poor is affected, or else it is the result of their own vices," added Chandavoine, sententiously, stirring up the sugar at the bottom of his cup; "and then it deserves no pity."

"It is evident," chimed in a retired tradesman, "good citizens grow rich, the savings' banks are there to prove it; and besides, you have only to read the King's speech every year: '*Our prosperity continues to increase!*'"

"The Count knows better than any one the ingratitude of those people: he has been cruelly duped by his native generosity," added an old attorney.

As he listened to the severe and cutting language of Count Duriveau, the pale and expressive face of Martin did not portray either surprise or indigna-

tion, but a bitter sadness, we might almost say painful compassion. From time to time he cast an uneasy glance at the thicket wherein the poacher still lay squatted, and there without being seen, overheard the discourse.

"But what you never will believe, gentlemen," continued the Count, "is this: I was fool enough to take to heart these deceptive sufferings which haunt our public streets."

"Indeed! my lord."

"Yes, Gentlemen, and what is better, I said to myself, with a heavy heart: I will leave to the savage filth, in which they live and die, the worthless populace of towns, and go down to my estates: there at least, I shall still find men who are simple, good, and grateful—who never have been corrupted by the hideous scum of large towns.—There I will deal out my charities, without fear of misplacing them.—There is still virtue in the fields!!—So here I came, and found my father an experienced old man."

"Oh!" cried M. Chandavoine with signs of profound veneration. "Oh! he was a first-rate man!"

"My father," continued the Count, "had forbidden his tenants, on pain of severe punishment, and prevented by a stout reinforcement of ruthless keepers, to carry off the withered twigs or dry wood in his forests; he had likewise prohibited them from gleaning in his fields and vineyards; his farm tenants, who were not punctual with their rent, were turned out; and as for your strolling beggars, they were left more particularly to the watch of two enormous Pyrenean mastiffs.

"He, he, he!" cried Chalumeau tittering; after which he whispered to his intimate friend:

"Chandavoine, do n't you see my wife?"

"No," said the other impatiently, "allow me to listen to the Count: he speaks like a lawyer—what a man! There 's a member for you who won't keep his tongue in his pocket.—He will speak much better than M. de la Levrasse."

"So here I came," continued the Count, "quite governed by my dreams of country philanthropy. Believing at first that my father had acted like a man without bowels, I ordered the mastiffs to be chained up, and under the influence of my creditors' charity, I plunged into the exercise of those fine theories which must have been imagined by some rogue who had neither house nor land:—'*The bashful pauper ought never to knock in vain at the rich man's door.—Suffer the poor man to glean in the rich man's field.—Be to little children what God is to little birds,—after the vintage, there will be something left for them to peck.*' It was very pathetic as you see; my eyes fill when I think of it," added the Count with a burst of laughter.—"Six months after my philanthropical experiments, *the bashful pauper*, a crowd of beggars, used to besiege my castle every day; my farm tenants never paid me their rents, *the poor man* cut down my trees, and fed his cows in my corn fields, whilst *the little birds*, in the shape of dreadful little blackguards, stole my game and pillaged my vineyards; then I began to grow tired of playing the part of a public benefactor."

Loud shouts of laughter greeted the close of this peroration.

"Egad, I should think so, at that cost!" said the old attorney, who had eaten too much. "Such a part is too expensive."

"The better a man is, the more he is imposed on. I have experienced it in a small degree, as you, Count, have in a great degree," said Chandavoine with doctorial gravity.

"Chandavoine," whispered poor Chalumeau, who began to be seriously uneasy, "do n't you see my wife?"

"No!" said the former, shrugging up his shoulders.

"The Count is very right," said another guest;—"it is enough to disgust one with pity."

"And this is what I did, gentlemen," resumed the Count, "those scandalous abuses, which my absurd indulgence encouraged, opened my eyes. Having recovered my senses, and my reason, and being restored to a proper contempt for that hateful, corrupt, and brutified race, I laid upon them, as far as depended on me, a rod of iron. And then—all was restored to order. To prison went the first vagabond who cut a bundle of wood in my forests! a fine was laid on the first wretch who let his cows graze in my meadows! Ejected without pity every farm tenant behind with his rent. Such was my father's method, and the best. As for the vagrant beggars, who were silly enough to come to my doors, two fierce and enormous Newfoundland dogs received the bold and hungry vermin with open mouths. And therefore believe me, follow my example, gentlemen. Let us abide by our lawful rights; let us hold together, close our ranks—we who have property. No concussions: it is a cowardly recognition of that false, tyrannical, and insolent *right* of the poor to be relieved by the rich. Let us show ourselves without mercy: without that we shall be inundated, and, faith! it is better to eat the wolf than be eaten by him."

The impressive tone of the Count, the vivacity of his manly features, his authoritative gesture, made a deep impression on his auditors; his cruel paradoxes which made selfishness lawful, and raised it to a duty, were greeted with almost unanimous applause.

The painful emotion which Martin had felt at first, at the beginning of this colloquy between the Count and his friends, had given place to deep anguish; casting his eyes now upon the Count, then upon the thicket of shrubs wherein the poacher lay hidden, and which was now pitch dark, the man having disappeared behind the tall oak trees, Martin seemed to dread some danger for the Count.

After a moment's hesitation, and availing himself of one of those pauses which often intervene in the most animated conversations, Martin drew towards his master, still leaning against the open window, and said to him with respectful concern:

"My lord, you do not perhaps reflect that the night air is damp, and it is not prudent for your lordship—"

The Count equally surprised and offended, interrupted Martin, and said to him in a harsh voice:

"Once for all, know that I never tolerate the slightest approach to familiarity, even under pretence of attentive duty.—Relieve those gentlemen of their cups.

Martin bowed without speaking.

After taking away and setting down successively each cup upon the tray, he laid them upon the small table, at which he kept standing, with a pale face, and his burning gaze fixed on the dark thicket with an anxiety which increased every moment.

The stern and cutting language of the host had deeply impressed his auditors; nevertheless, one of them, Monsieur Chandavoine, in spite of his traditional selfishness and his narrow understanding, could not help feeling a test of humanity in him, and this feeling rebelled against the Count's politest maxims: he therefore observed timidly:

"Allow me, my lord, to make an observation."

"My dear M. Chandavoine, I attend to you," said Duriveau.

"Like you, my lord, I am ready to condemn the vices and corruption of the lower classes."

"Only whilst admitting that the poor have no claim to help from the rich, would it not be—in certain given circumstances, and with all due restrictions—would it not be, if not the duty, at least the policy, of the rich, to assist the poor? the poor

man, be it understood, showing himself humble, submissive, and grateful for whatever the rich did for him."

"Undoubtedly, there is no legal duty in charity on the rich man's part," said the old attorney; "but after all, there is a spice of truth in what Chandavoine says."

"Yes, yes," repeated several of the company, "for there are some queer customers among the poor."

"And we must take great care not to provoke them."

"What do you think, my lord?"

"This is what I think, gentlemen," answered the Count in his most bitter and cutting tone: not only charity is not a duty for the rich man, but charity is stupid, dangerous, and execrable.

"Charity stupid!" cried one.

"Charity dangerous!" cried another.

"Charity detestable!" cried a third.

And every one looked at the Count with amazement.

"Yes," answered he in a haughty, decisive tone: "yes, charity is stupid, charity is dangerous, charity is detestable; nor is it I who say so, gentlemen, but the greatest, the most learned men, whose comprehensive genius is admired by all Europe; and, what they say, they prove by facts and stubborn figures. These illustrious men are my saints; their writings are my bible and catechism; and as—like a true believer—I know my bible by heart, here is word for word what Malthus says,—Saint Malthus, one of the most admirable political economists of modern times. Listen, gentlemen, attentively:

"'*When a man is born in a world already filled, if his family is unable to maintain him, and if society do not want his labour, he has no right whatever to any share of food, he is not wanted on our earth; at nature's prolific banquet there is no room for him.*'"

"*Nature's prolific banquet*—he! he! he! your Malthus is very flowery," said the old attorney, who prided himself on his reading; "it has the very sound of Fenelon."

"'*Nature bids that man withdraw,*'" resumed the Count, continuing his quotation, "'*and she will not be long before she enforces that order herself.*'

"Is not that clear and precise, gentlemen?" added the Count, triumphantly; "what, when that kind and excellent nature, like a wise mother, shall order dame Poverty to clear off the superabundant population, shall we go, out of foolish charity, and resist her views? Come, gentlemen, such conduct would be mad."

The Count's hearers, after that terrible quotation, looked at each other in dumb silence.

"What!" said Chandavoine,—"what—Malthus—really says——"

"I shall have the honour to send you to-morrow a complete set of his works," said the Count; "it is an excellent course of study for landlords. Read, gentlemen, read, and cultivate Malthus: you will there discover in that excellent reading the full nature of your rights; you will likewise find in him this passage, which I recommend to your notice whenever the demon of charity shall tempt you: '*That every one in this world has to answer for himself: so much the worse for those who are not wanted here below; there would be nothing else to do if we had to give bread to all who are hungry; who knows whether there would remain sufficient for the rich, as population always has a tendency to exceed the means of subsistence? Charity is an act of madness, and it encourages poverty.*' Well! gentlemen, what did I say to you at first?"

"The fact is," said the old attorney, perfectly convinced, "that seen in that light, it is true, charity is *illegal*."

"And observe, gentlemen," resumed the Count, exulting as he spoke, "that Malthus was a man of genius, and an excellent man; he had no sentiments in common with those pert and stupid reformers of the present day, who think of what *ought to be*, instead of what is. But Malthus, knowing the reality of things, would neither lure nor deceive any one: a severe logician, and convinced that the common people are and ever will be devoted to the most wretched condition, he has, in his admirable work, strictly forbidden the poor to make children; and he was right. What is the use of this seed of starvelings? Marcus, the disciple of Malthus, and Adam Smith, another great writer of that school, has gone a step beyond him:—he has boldly suggested the suppression of the children of the poor."

"The devil!" cried Chandavoine, scratching his ear. "That Marcus was a daring fellow."

"A truly consistent and logical reasoner," said the Count, with his trenchant irony. "Finally, another saint, John Baptiste Say, has used these memorable words, which, gentlemen, I invite you to consider when your labourers complain of the low rate of their wages: '*When the demand for labour is great, the price of labour falls below the average required to keep up the same number of workmen; consequently, those families in which there are most children, and bodily infirmities, die off. From that moment, the search after labour declines; and there being less competition among the labourers, the price rises again.*' In other words, gentlemen, as Ricardo has it (another of my saints), '*by dint of privation the number of workmen is reduced, and the equilibrium is restored.*' The thing is clear: Nature will admit of no redundant population, and thus mortality does the business of the parish beadle."*

"No doubt, and since it cannot be otherwise," said one of the auditors, "we ought to rejoice that we are not among the *redundant*."

"Manifestly so. Faith the political economists are right: every one for himself."

"So much the worse for the poor!"

"We must all try not to belong to their body, and so good luck."

"Chandavoine, where can my wife be got to?" said M. Chalumeau, who had been too busy with his wife's disappearance to attend much to the discourse.

"Let me alone with your wife!" said Chandavoine; "go and look for her."

"I dare not, whilst the Count is speaking. Come, see there off he starts again."

"From all this, gentlemen," continued the Count, stimulated by the deep impression produced by his quotations and commentaries, "what are we to conclude? That we are bound, as I observed to you just now, to stand by and support each other, we who are proprietors, and, under the pretext of charity or pity, not to make any base concession which would be turned against us; for to pity those who suffer want, is indirectly to accuse society, and society can do no wrong."

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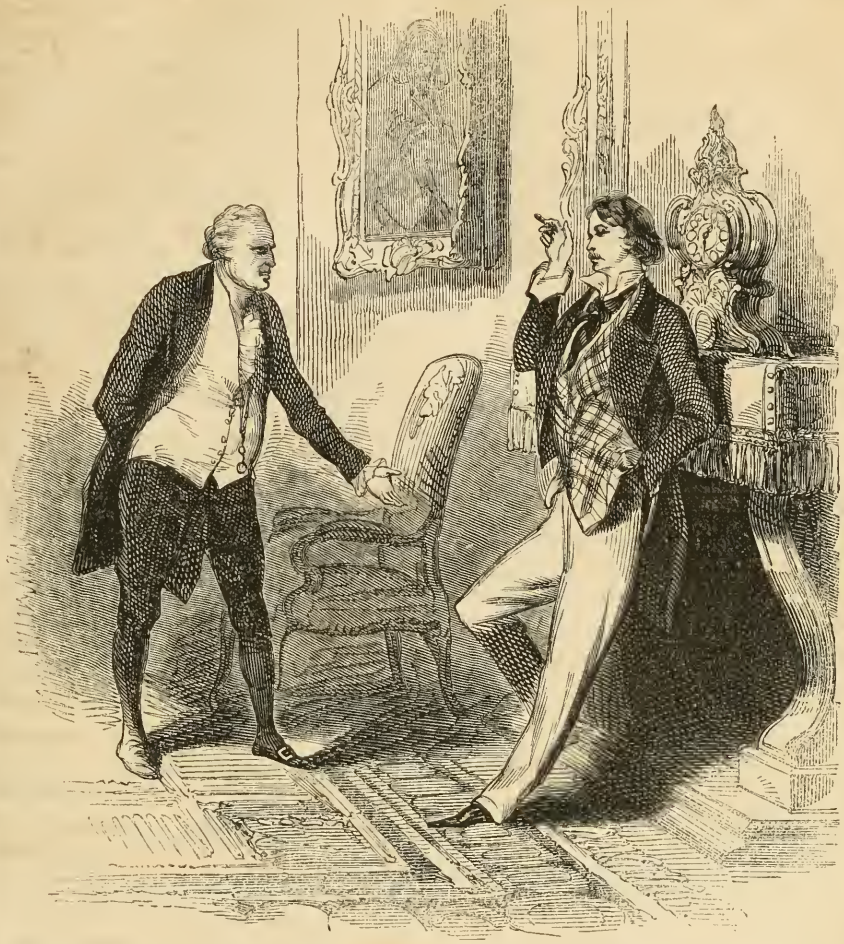
* We cannot suffer these passages on Political Economy to go abroad among the people without cautioning them against lending a too credent ear to those who strive to incite them against the possessors of property by such quotations. Notwithstanding the cruel sufferings of the unemployed labourer, the general class of the working man is far the happiest of all; and the progress of things is doing so much for them at present,—especially the spread of CHEAP LITERATURE,—that they will shortly be a power and authority in the state. These horrible quotations certainly make one shudder,—but the men who wrote them have done infinite good to their country by the light they have thrown, in other pages, upon the value and direction of capital and labour. The true principle of economy is to save, and he who saves always has something to bestow.—*Translator's Note.*



"Society cannot be wrong, I repeat. This principle established, let us not deceive ourselves: between him who possesses something and him who has nothing, there is war to the knife. Well, then, let us have war! The class of non-proprietors, both in town and country, feel towards us a fierce and savage jealousy; and for what reason? Because we have the superfluity of living, and they have not the necessary wants: the thing is quite plain; and I, in their condition, would do the same. They want to pillage our houses, drink our wines, and get into our carriages; be it so—it is natural for them to wish so; let them do it if they can: the contest is a fair one. But let these non-proprietors not be surprised, that we on our side return them hatred for hatred; that our instinct of self-preservation orders us to do our best to muzzle and hold fast the wild beast whose mouth and teeth are open and ready to bite. I covet a seat in the legislature in order to concur in our common interest, and for the sake of our children, to make the bat, the bit, and the shackles to sway and manage the wild beast—that he may have neither the strength nor the inclination to get loose. For he hungers after property, the starving beast! whilst I wish my son, and my son's son, to inherit my estate, as I myself inherited it from my father. Now, the wild beast I am speaking of wants to inherit from the past, the present, and the future. But, let them be patient; we are here,—and, therefore, gentlemen, let us drink to the eternal bondage of the beast!"

Then turning towards Martin:

"Bring in the *liqueurs*."

The Count had scarcely uttered these words when Martin, uttering a cry of terror, sprang towards the Count, pushed him aside, and leapt at a bound over the wall, which was about four feet high, and fell in the middle of the thicket where the poacher lay in ambush; and almost immediately, and from this spot, a shot resounded in the dark.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AVIARY.

At the noise of fire-arms which resounded so near the window of the winter-garden, amazement and consternation became general; the women shrieked and rushed towards the doors of the hot-house. Several of the Count's guests who stood about him at the moment, ran likewise here and there; M. Cha

lumeau was one of these fugitives; a few, however, collected bravely about their Amphytrion,

"The Count, still resolute though slightly pale, returned to the window from which Martin had so rudely pushed him; and after a first impulse of confusion and surprise, not yet knowing the cause of the shot, said to his guests with composure:

"Never mind, gentlemen; it is no doubt the signal of some firework, with which my servants wish to surprise me, only my *valet-de-chambre* seemed to me rather eager to take his place in it."

As he pronounced these words, Martin, after being absent but a few minutes, ran hastily up, opened one of the doors of the winter-garden, came in, and said to his master with a quivering voice:

"He has escaped! I lost the track of him in the thickest of the wood."

"Who mean you?" cried the Count.

"The man who was concealed there, my lord. I had seen him, by the light of the lamps, rise suddenly up in the thicket where he was squatted. Perhaps he had no evil design, but, in my first impulse, I did not stop to think; believing my master was in some danger, I leapt through the window to seize the intruder: during the struggle, a pistol which he carried about him went off; I pursued him as he ran away, and——"

"But you are wounded," cried the Count, approaching towards Martin.

"I believe I am, my lord, in the hand—but it's very trifling: the ball just grazed my fingers."

"Never mind, it must be dressed," said the Count; and several of the servants having entered the room on hearing the explosion, he said to one of them:

"Send instantly for the physician, at Salbris."

"What kind of man was the robber?" said M. Chandavoine, with a look of alarm; "perhaps it was that scoundrel Bamboche, whom they are hunting on every side, and whose description has been posted in the bills."

On discovering that Bamboche, whose name he now heard for the first time since his arrival in Sologne, was hunted on all sides, Martin, in spite of his agitated feelings, started with astonishment, whilst his words died on his lips.

Struck by the expression his features had assumed the Count said to him:

"Martin, what's the matter?"

"Nothing, my lord, nothing; I feel a little weak—the blood I have lost, perhaps——"

"Were you able to remark him well, the robber?" asked Chandavoine.

"Yes, sir," resumed Martin: "he was very small, very dark, and very young—eighteen or twenty at the most," added Martin with confidence; "he wore a white smock frock, and a cap."

"That is not Bamboche's description," said Chandavoine; "but since he carried a pistol, he must have been an assassin."

"An assassin! and why the deuce should they murder me, my dear sir?" said the Count with careless indifference; "unless it be the salutary warning of a certain anonymous correspondent," added the Count with a bitter smile: "it is, however, the proper business of honest Beaucadet, the quarter-master of the *gendarmerie*, whom I will send for to-morrow to take my evidence. Martin, go and have your wound dressed. I think you are a good servant. As for the wretch who wounded you, although he has vanished, Beaucadet will track him; he is a sharp hound, and will be sure to pounce upon him; and then he shall have his deserts."

During the concluding part of the Count's speech, Chandavoine had taken a paper from his pocket and was attentively reading it. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"Oh! here is something strange!"

And on the Count looking at him inquiringly, Chandavoine continued:

"I still believe that the intruder might be the wretch named Bamboche, and was reading his description which has been spread about the country, and which I received just as I came here. This description, I own, is altogether different from that your servant has given of the man who wounded him. But now comes the strange point of the matter. We were speaking at dinner of the famous Basquine, of whom so much of good and evil was said."

"Well!" said the Count, whose brow darkened at the mention of that woman's name.

"Read, my lord," said Chandavoine, offering the bill to the Count, who glanced at it, "you will see that Bamboche the robber has tatooed on his arm these words: '*Love for life to Basquine.*'"

"And truly so it is; the ruffian prints in his arm the name of that horrid creature. How extraordinary!" said the Count, so deeply astonished that he did not remark that according to the description, Martin's name was likewise tatooed on the arm of the same robber.

Suddenly, in the midst of a loud uproar, Monsieur Chalumeau was seen to issue from the angle of a walk, pale, bewildered, and full of wrath, and dragging along his better half, who, confounded and woful to behold, hung her head over her heaving chest, and would gladly have bid the earth open to hide her shame.

Treading closely on their heels came Scipio, with a look of insolent mockery, his hands buried in the pockets of his trousers; at some distance behind followed a group of the Count's guests, so stupified by the incident, and especially by the frank boldness of the young Lothario, that they observed a deep silence, interrupted here and there by the humming sound of low whispering.

"My lord Count!" cried M. Chalumeau in a voice choaked with passion, walking up to Scipio's father, "it is an outrageous affront! and I hold you responsible for it."

"May I know sir——"

"I tell you, my lord Count, you are responsible for it!" cried the unfortunate elector, interrupting M. Duriveau. "Yes, you are the cause of all, and must answer for all; for when a man has such a son as yours, sir, he should shut him up—ay, sir, sequestrate him when ladies come to the house."

"But, sir——"

"But, sir," shrieked the hot and indignant elector, "do you know what has occurred just now? Do you know what I have sustained, sir? Do you know where I found my wife?"

"Indeed, sir, I know nothing about it," said the Count coolly, with difficulty repressing the strong feelings excited in him by this new freak of Scipio's; "but if you have any thing to say to me, let me request of you, for your sake as well as mine, to go with me into my private room, to avoid the injury of a public scandal."

"A public scandal!" cried Chalumeau, with a sardonic shout of laughter; "but I wish my voice could be heard from here to Romorantin, that I might proclaim to all the world that my wife is a wretch—and her son a——"

But here Scipio, touching the shoulder of the plaintiff with the tip of his finger, stopped him at once, as he repeated with his clear haughty voice:

"A what?"

The storming elector turned towards the Viscount, measured him at first with an indignant look; then, placing himself boldly before him, he cried out blusteringly:

"I say, sir, that you are a man inflated—inflated with adulterous passions—indecently adulterous!"

Scipio was a man who never laughed, but he could not help smiling, as he said to Chalumeau with a condescending wave of the hand:

"Good—now you may go!"

"How! you tell me to go! I am not your servant, sir! I do n't need your permission to——"

"Sir," said the Count, "I conjure you; if not for your sake, for Madame's, put an end to this painful scene, and believe me, too, that appearances are often deceitful and——"

"It is not appearances that are deceitful—it is the women rather!" roared the elector, darting a look at the too tender Chalumeau as if he would have crushed her beneath the weight of the sarcasm, "*appearances*," he resumed, with exasperation, "appearances! On hearing the shot fired, my head filled with the tale of the bandit they are hunting for—I ran off; I opened the first door I came to—it was the hot-house. I ran through it; I reached a rotundo where there was an aviary—I shut myself in—I heard through a door a sort of rustling, and a woman's voice. Oh that voice! I knew it again. I pushed open the door—it was a boudoir: and in that room, gentlemen, what did I see? the son of this gentleman with his arms round my wife."

"I tell you again, sir," said the Count, just able to contain himself, and darting a terrific glance at Scipio, "that I am confounded at this event; but the scandal you are raising is really deplorable!"

"I raise scandal! What, is it I who raise scandal?" shrieked the unhappy complainant; "this is too much! Ah! people may well say: '*Like father, like son!*'"

"Sir!"

"Sir," rejoined the elector with the lofty air of a melodramatic prince, "you will readily conceive that I and my political friends cannot have for a representative before the country a man whose son has done us——"

"Done us—done us," said Chandavoine to his friend; "speak for yourself."

"True, my worthy friend," replied Chalumeau: "whose son has done me——"

Here the Count interrupted him.

Vexed beyond measure by this exposure, and desirous to bring it to a close, he said to the raging husband:

"Be it so, sir; however valuable your vote and the votes of your friends would have been to me, I disclaim them. And now, sir, I trust that you will understand that, notwithstanding, I feel deeply honoured by your visit. Circumstances, to my great regret, are such at present, that I must not detain you here any longer."

"Come, madame—come, you brazen-face," said the elector in a thundering voice as he drew off the unhappy frail one, who did her utmost to faint; but her flourishing, luxurious, and redundant health resisted her desire: the poor innocent wanted that requisite skill by which our town ladies learn to contrive with decorum a simulated swoon.

As the lofty Chalumeau was advancing to the door, Scipio said to him with a titter:

"So then! you know I shall be ready for you, whenever you like."

The elector, being informed in a whisper, from Chandavoine, of the true sense of Scipio's remark, replied with great majesty:

"I am not a fighting bully, sir: I am a husband abominably injured."

"Now then," said the Viscount with sneering gravity, "I am free to declare that the gentleman is the dupe of an illusion, and I am also bound to proclaim the entire innocence of the lady."

"My love—you hear?" ventured to say the frail Chalumeau.

"A pretty warrant, truly!" cried the elector. Come, madame, come along——"

* * * * * *

The departure of the Count's guests was effected in deep silence and amidst a most painful embarrassment; the female part of the company, who envied Madame Chalumeau, looked upon as a fashionable woman in the district, were delighted at the adventure, and testified their virtuous indignation. Among the men, some were jealous of M. Chalumeau, as a *richer proprietor;* others had themselves offered incense to the shrine of Madame Chalumeau, but their attentions had not been rewarded, although there had been a talk of a certain nephew on the husband's side, a gigantic lieutenant of dragoons, who had spent several furloughs at the Gaudriola, M. Chalumeau's villa: to sum up all, men and women were keenly delighted at the prodigious scandal which bid fair, for a long time to come, to furnish matter for rural discussion.

The Count, who had sufficient self-command to master his feelings to the end, had extricated himself as well as he could from the difficult plight in which he stood relative to his guests, and had courteously attended to the street door, and even to the steps outside, the lady who had sat beside him at dinner.

At length the last carriage had left the Castle of Tremblay.

The Count, instead of returning into the house, descended the flight of steps: he was choaking with suppressed anger, and hoped by walking about, that the open air would assuage his violent passion, and that he might recover his composure so far as to have a decisive interview with his son, an interview become still more indispensible by the recent event which concluded this unlucky day.

The chief actor that morning of a deplorable adventure which could not fail to produce the worst impressions on the country people, Scipio had at night completed the measure of his folly, by making the most considerable among the gentry hostile to the Count.

By this means Scipio had contrived to wound his father's two most impetuous passions—*his love and his ambition;* for the humorous adventure of the Viscount with the frail Chalumeau was destroying the parliamentary views of Duriveau by withdrawing the votes which might secure his election: his love, because the same day was to see his union with Mrs. Wilson, and Raphaela's with Scipio; and the latter seemed bent on delaying or preventing a match which alone could gratify his father's wishes.

Feverishly agitated the Count, was walking up and down the court-yard before the Castle, pressing from time to time his two hands to his burning brow, and glancing occasionally with bitter irony at those brilliant lights shining through every casement of the broad ground-floor through which he descried the glittering liveries of his retainers as they passed to and fro.

For the first time in his life, that man, so inflated with his wealth, that man so vain-glorious as to be able to say that his son should succeed him, and probably his grandson his son—each of them to dazzle and subjugate the poor by the awe which so immense a fortune would inspire;—for the first time, that man, urged on by the unhappy position of his affairs, felt a sort of bitterness, when he reflected that all these possessions, all their pomp and magnificence, would accrue as a right and without trouble to that insolent presumptuous boy, for whom he felt a sentiment akin to hatred at that moment; for, despite the singular energy of his character, the Count dreaded the freezing callousness and sarcastic irony of his son; and therefore the consciousness of his own foible exasperated him the more both against himself and against Scipio.

Never, perhaps, had the Count experienced more poignantly the tardy and vain regret of having played the part of a young father to this audacious son; he saw himself, he felt himself overpowered, unless he at once cut into the quick, unless, that very day, and with a high hand, he began to overawe the Viscount with an authority so long misunderstood—or, rather to say, unknown.

A glare of light, and the dashing of a trailing sword, and sounding spurs, drew the Count from his painful meditations. He turned his head round, and, by the light of a lamp which a servant carried,

he saw Monsieur Beaucadet coming down the flight of steps with significant pomposity.

Feeling greatly annoyed by this visit, the Count walked up to the subaltern officer, and said to him abruptly:

"What do you want?"

"My lord Count," said the *gendarme* gravely and with more feeling than he generally exhibited, "a great misfortune has just happened."

"What misfortune?"

"I went to the farm of Grand-Genevre, in order to proceed to the examination of the girl called Bruyere, suspected of infanticide."

"Well?"

"The unfortunate was guilty—for, on seeing me and my men—she flung herself into the pond."

"Great God!" cried the Count.

"And she was drowned," said Beaucadet.

"Oh! but this is frightful!" muttered the Count with a look of horror, and hiding his face in his hands.

"I came, my lord Count," resumed Beaucadet, "in order to——"

"Very well, let me alone."

"But, my lord Count——"

"Begone, I tell you."

"As the representative of the law," said Beaucadet in his voice of office—I have a legal right to act in its name. I have just been informed that, this evening, a pistol was fired off by a man in ambuscade, on one of your servants. My duty, my lord Count, is to make a report, and to——"

"Well! make your report if you like; but do n't bother me," cried the Count, losing all patience, and stamping furiously.

"But my lord Count, that is not all; the wounded servant is named Martin, and I suspect him—of—"

Beaucadet did not finish his sentence, for the Count, without listening to him any longer, disappeared in one of the dark covered walks of the park.

"It 's no matter if he won't hear me," said the officer; "this is a prime opportunity to examine this Martin, whom I take to be a nice chap, since his name is written on one of the arms of that robber Bamboche, who let himself be saluted by my *gendarmes*, the beggarly rascal."

So saying, Beaucadet returned into the castle.

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It was about half an hour after his meeting with the officer that the Count ascended the flight of steps leading to the castle.

Duriveau was pale, but perfectly collected. On entering the hall, the first person he met was Scipio.

The Viscount was preparing to return to his apartment, and was just then going to light his cigar by the taper which is *valet-de-chambre* was holding out in one hand, whilst he carried in the other a small decanter of rum on a small waiter.

"Scipio, come with me," said the Count to him in a calm tone.

"Wait a bit—I am lighting my cigar."

"You can light it in my chamber," answered the Count quietly.

Scipio, holding in his mouth the cigar which he had not had time to light, listlessly followed his father through the sumptuous rooms, with their desert pomp.

The Count soon after opened the door of his private apartment, and his son entered it behind him.

To imagination must be left the seas of thoughts—of certain and uncertain expectations which either party's mood and relation obliged each to have of the other's present frame of mind, and attempt on the one side to coerce nature, and on the other to resist the legitimate office and affection of one proud of paternity.

CHAPTER V.

FATHER AND SON.

Count Duriveau drew the bolts of his chamber-door, a large room adorned with furniture of lacker and gold, hung with green damask, lighted by a candelabra with three wax-lights, with a silk screen to moderate the glare.

The Count's face was grave and severe; he stood for a moment without speaking to his son, and looked at him sternly.

The Viscount, carelessly leaning with his back to the fire-place, kept turning his cigar in his mouth, which he had not yet lighted it is true, his hands deeply sunk in his fobs, tossing himself about alternately on either leg; his pretty face was paler now than usual, and the lids of his large dark eyes were partially inflamed; for, whilst he was engaged in misleading the virtue of the fat and tender Chalumeau, he had drunk copiously of port-wine; but he was by no means intoxicated, as one might have expected; for wine had long since lost its power over him—he was perfectly master of his sense and reason; his head was clear: he was merely *full*, as the slang of the free liver would say; and in his case this repletion showed itself in general by increasing his disdainful apathy, and impertinent indifference. Thus, whilst waiting for his father to speak, he quietly lit his cigar at a taper placed upon the chimney-piece.

Duriveau snatched the cigar from him, and threw it into the fire, saying:

"I do n't allow smoking here, sir."

"Hey-day!" cried Scipio, looking at his father with stupor; "and how long, pray, have you forbidden it?"

"Since I resolved to take my proper place, sir, and to keep you to your own," said the Count harshly and cuttingly.

"Oh, oh!" returned Scipio, coolly, accustomed to sneer at his father's few fits of severity; "it seems we are to play a new part: I am to be Clitandre or Damis; and you the character of the worthy Orgon or Géronte. Will it last long? shall you have your naughty son beaten to death? Were, then, a Scapin to say to me: 'Noble Damis, the devil take your father! plague upon the old grumbler! When will that cursed greybeard give place to us his successor?'"

There is no describing the strong impertinent assurance with which this banter was delivered by Scipio.

Although fully prepared for these sarcastic sallies, which had long furnished him with entertainment, and though he had resolved to be calm, the Count gave way to an involuntary burst of passion, and exclaimed, stepping towards his son in a threatening attitude:

"No more insolence."

"Good! here comes the scene of the stick! I expected it," said Scipio, with increasing boldness; "come now, make haste:—a stick—a stick directly for Signor Géronte."

"Scipio!" cried the Count, in a thundering voice, interrupting his son, and seizing his arm with a quivering hand——

Then, after a moment's silence, he esumed with bitter anguish:

"It is my own fault; I have encouraged your effrontery—I have tolerated your insolent familiarity. This is the fruit of the education I have given you. This last lesson you have given me is a rude one—it will be remembered, and may be the last."

"Psha!" said Scipio, "every education is alike. Préval was brought up by a priest, and under the eye of a kind mother; and yet he committed forgery and deserved to be sent to the gallies; D'Havrin-

court has just left the Polytechnic school, with its scanty rations, and he has been sentenced as a prodigal in our courts of law. Come, you are too modest! Your pupil does you credit."

"Enough, sir, enough! you do n't know me yet, but you shall soon; and, mordieu! from to-day, from this very hour, I tell you again, each of us shall resume his place; and henceforth you shall be as humble, as submissive, and as respectful to me as you have hitherto been full of insolence and raillery."

Scipio, who seldom let any thing surprise him, was wonder-struck; never, till then, had the rare remonstrances of his father been able to withstand a jest; never till then had his father spoken to him with that firmness and resolute spirit to resume or maintain his authority.

"So then," he resumed, looking at his father with the deepest compassion, and as if he grieved to see him lower himself to so vulgar and trite a reproof, "then you are indeed in earnest?"

"Quite in earnest, sir."

"This is more novel than pleasant. And for what reason is it that you have chosen this fine day to come and *bluster* your paternal authority and moral recommendations?"

"Have you the impudence to put such a question to me, when not an hour ago a horrid and scandalous exposure——"

"Come! no nonsense," said the young reprobate, shrugging his shoulders. "Look at me without laughing. Remember your own pleasant adventure with the Marchioness of Saint Hilaire, which you told us one evening at supper at the fair Zephirina's."

For a moment the Count stood dumb-founded and thunder-stricken, under the crushing recollection which his son had recalled to him.

"Come do n't be afraid," said Scipio to him, with ronical affability: "I do n't say so to reproach you, not I—far from it: so do n't be so silly as to be prudish; your adventure was worth a hundred such as mine, for the Marchioness of Saint Hilaire was bewitching; if I remember, you were in the country, at the seat of the Marquis, a fine man and a brave one; you had won two thousand louis-d'ors from him that very evening at whist, and in the middle of the night he caught you with his wife. It was magnificent; without counting the crowning piece of fun—a duel next morning on the bank, when you shattered the poor cuckold's thigh, and sent him with it to die in Italy. I have always thought of that affair with envy. To kill so fine a husband! I who never killed any one but that big captain, whom I had chanced to slash over the face with my whip whilst driving my four-in-hand. The nasty fellow! why he was scarred with the small-pox, shaggy as a bear, and wore no stockings; faugh! what a corpse! what a trophy for me!"

The Count could not conjure up a word in reply. It was an awful lesson; in his impotent rage he put his two bent hands to his brow muttering:

"My God! my God!"

"Do you know what you should have done respecting what you term this evening's *scandal?*" resumed Scipio with ruthless irony. "For I, for my part, am just; I know what are a father's sacred duties. You should have said to me: 'Are you not ashamed, my son? a fat, dumpy, little woman, called Chalumeau, and with so flashy a dress too.' I should then have answered you respectfully: 'O father of mine, have we not all of us sometimes an unaccountable whim? the strange taste and fancy of a sated *gourmand?* Have we not been together, you and I, to the common wine-shop, to eat the *mironton*, which the working man delights in, and the porter devours? and did not the change give it a relish for once?' This reasoning, and these excuses, would have disarmed you; you would have given me your fatherly blessing, and we would have discussed together a bottle of rum and drank the health of the Marchioness of Saint Hilaire, the beauty of your youthful days."

"Be it so," resumed the Count, endeavouring to recover himself after so rude a shock. "I did wrong to talk to you with levity of the follies of my youth, which I ought never to have mentioned to you; but you ought not to have the impudence to reproach me with them, nor do they at all excuse or authorise your infamous behaviour to-night, the more grievous to me, because you know my motive for inviting these people to dine."

"Yes, you would be a senator. What you a member of the House? Come now, how could you be a member? You are too candid, and take things too much in earnest for a Parliament man."

"That you should respect neither my house, nor my projects," replied the Count, without noticing his son's banter, "I have no right to complain of, or to wonder at: I allow it; so let that pass," added the Count bitterly. "But this exposure is not the only piece of scandal which this day has brought forth."

"How so?"

"That unfortunate child."

"What unfortunate child?"

"Discovered just now in that den."

"What of it?"

"Why, sir, is it not frightful?"

"What?"

"Your conduct."

"To have got a bastard in that little wench? How silly to talk so! Why at this game of precocious paternity, you ought to allow me ten points at least, for you were younger than I, as you owned yourself, when you made a mother of that little lace-worker, the first fancy of your young days, who, I believe, went mad."

At this new charge, this second reproach, more dreadful than the first, the Count's features were overspread with confusion, he started; then, driven to his last shifts by the deadly and inexorable reasoning of his son, he exclaimed:

"But she at least did not kill herself in despair."

"Who has killed herself?" inquired Scipio.

"Bruyere."

"She!" exclaimed the youth. And his pale face grew red.

"She!" he repeated again.

And the perspiration streamed from his brow

"Yes, this evening they went to arrest her, as suspected of infanticide; then indeed, bewildered with shame, she drowned herself; yes drowned! do you hear? Ah! this at last subdues your contemptuous coldness, you beardless seducer, you vain-glorious profligate," cried the Count with lamentable imprudence, for he was thereby in danger of exasperating the detestable want of heart of that misguided stripling.

And this was the consequence:—

An unbidden tear had risen to Scipio's eye, but it instantly vanished; his head, which bent for a moment beneath the fearful burden of such a thought, was raised again haughty and insolent; his faltering voice was restored, and he resumed in a jeering tone:

"What! then the little wench is dead?"

"Yes, dead," repeated the Count, watching his son with a keen glance,—"dead! do you hear? dead I say!"

"Well!" answered Scipio with amazing coolness: "if you can boast of your fine duel with the Marquis, here's a woman who has flung herself into the water on my account—that makes us even."

"Monster!" roared the Count.

"You have lost a trump!" said Scipio shrugging his shoulders; then he added very deliberately: "play your best card."

He then took out a tooth-pick and began to use it.

Then there was a silent pause, a silence deep and awful, in that chamber. The son gloried in having shown so much *pluck;* the father was terrified by what he had just heard.

"He frightens me," said the Count half aside, and looking at his son; then he resumed in an altered tone: "no, it is impossible at your age to be so hardened; the habit of making every thing a jest has carried you too far; this is only a jest, though a ferocious one; you will be sorry for it, and——"

Scipio here interrupted his father, and said to him in an accent of extraordinary hardihood:

"What I regret, indeed, is to see you, with all the sense you have, sinking and floundering in your moral quagmire! Your position in respect to me is so false, that you are quite bothered. What you now so demurely call my *vices*, my *offences*, my *savageness*, have not thwarted your projects. You used to laugh like a madman at my wild pranks, and you encouraged them by quoting your own. Say, is that true? Yes, or no?"

Once more, enduring the dreadful consequence of the education and the fatal principles he had given the unhappy boy, the Count did not—could not—find a word to say in reply; for Scipio was right; and, as he rioted with heartless joy in his advantage, he continued with a burst of disdainful boldness!

"You are really too good! merely for the sake of the wife of one of these stupid electors. My adventure is no longer a droll one; and my unnatural father would call me an adulterer! How tremendous! Because the catastrophe of my fancy for this rustic virtue may, according to your account, hinder you from marrying me to Raphaela Wilson, you lecture me as savagely as those brutish peasants, who this morning wanted to argue the point with pitchforks."

"And were it even so!" cried the Count, "and that my susceptibility—call it my morality if you will—had taken alarm on account of your interest——"

"My interest, indeed?"

"And who told you that I do n't think of your interest as well as my own, by trying to become a member? And as for Miss Wilson, am I not justified in supposing that the scandalous scene this morning may compromise your marriage with her?"

"Indeed?" said the Viscount, with a sardonic smile, and casting a penetrating look at his father. "And if I were to change my mind relative to this marriage?"

"What do you say?" cried the Count, with inward alarm.

"Yes, if I should not please to marry Raphaela Wilson?" resumed Scipio, casting a second inquisitive look at his father.

The Count returned no answer.

A cloud passed over his eyes—all his blood rushed up to his brain; but he endeavoured to conceal from his son the fearful agony he endured.

Two words are necessary to explain the nature of Count Duriveau's love for Mrs. Wilson.

This impetuous, energetic man, loved; and his love was like that of all men of his age and temper; when, after a life of easy and transient pleasures, they feel, for the first time, in spite of their age, a deep and ardent passion, which each succeeding day kindles and excites; sometimes by the provoking allurements of a yielding abandonment, and sometimes by denials which are severe without being desperate. For we must not conceal it, Mrs. Wilson loved her daughter too much and the Count too little not to have displayed in this singular intrigue the irresistible resources which a charming woman, who is also coquettish, sprightly, and experienced in the ways of life, a woman moreover *who is not in love*, can employ, in order to obtain an object so dear as the life of a beloved child.

Every excitative which could render incurable and insensate the love felt by a man so mature, when he flatters himself his passion is requited, and is certain he has atoned for his age by dint of care, attention, devotion, and passion; the conviction of being ardently loved for himself, at a time of life when men can so seldom hope for success; in fine, the blind idolatry which a proud man, above all, is sure afterwards to feel for the woman whose affection seems to countenance the most presumptuous claims of his self-conceit,—all these excitatives, we repeat, had borne the Count's passion along to the very utmost limits.

And then—the thing may appear vulgar, but it is important—in such an occurrence, this man, whom numerous gallantries and libertine pleasures had rendered callous as much at least as age had done, felt that his ardent passion for the charming widow made him a second Jason. This may seem too earthy a subject to the reader! Let him refer to the immortal pages of Molière; he will there find that it is especially the uneven course of sensual desire which renders the love of old men so obstinate, inveterate, and unyielding. What can be more serious, more violent, more affecting even, for the man who suffers intensely, than the passion of Arnolphe for Agnes; and likewise what can be more ludicrous than that passion?

The Count's love thus explained, you will understand his dreadful anguish when he thought that this love, that the possession of that charming woman, so eagerly desired and expected, was at his son's mercy; for he well knew the immoveable resolution of Mrs. Wilson that the same day was to witness the marriage of the Count and his son's.

Think then what must have been the anxiety he felt when he recalled to mind not only Scipio's cold neglect towards Raphaela during the day, but also the unfortunate discovery of the dead child and Bruyere's suicide; and again the scandalous adventure with the frail Chalumeau. Would Mrs. Wilson's love survive so many shocks? and if by a sudden turn of mind, Scipio, as he seemed to presage, should decline this marriage; and if the transient emotion which the young man hardly sought to dissemble, when at dinner he took up Basquine's defence against his father,—if this emotion should prove to be the index of a depraved passion for a creature so differently esteemed, a passion which might dissuade Scipio from a marriage already assented to; then, what must be done to determine him—to force him to the match.

The Count's thoughts were lost in this maze of conjecture; for him it was a very trying situation.

Very late, it is true, and guided entirely by the interest of his passions, this man had at last become conscious of his dignity as a father, so long misunderstood and insulted; this man had at last a consciousness of his son's vices; for the first time in his life, he spoke like a father, and his son, to every reproach, replied by these frightful recriminations,—"What is this offence when compared with the scandal you have boasted of to me? What is this crime compared with the crime you have prided yourself on?" Nor was that all; for at that very moment the Count felt himself in his son's power; as Scipio might nullify the Count's marriage by refusing to wed Raphaela.

"What 's to be done?" said the Count to himself, in his anguish. "If he refuses to marry Raphaela, I cannot talk to such a boy about the sincerity, the violence, of my love—if I did, what derision! and if I call in my paternal authority—what sneering mockery!"

Thus that haughty, lordly, and resolute man, that man who felt instinctively the sacred claims of a father—began to regret that he had had recourse to strong and dignified language; and moreover, as he was convinced he should learn nothing, and get nothing from the youth by harsh measures, he basely resolved, amidst feelings of wrath and shame, to take back his part of young father, in order to try

by what means to detect the secret designs of his son.

All these reflections had presented themselves at once to the Count's mind, in less time than it takes to write them. Well knowing that Scipio would not be the dupe of any sudden transition however skillfully managed, but unwilling to let him guess the cause of the abrupt change of tone and manner, the Count took a few hasty steps in his room in a thoughtful attitude, saying to himself loud enough to be heard by Scipio:

"Faith! I give it up."

Then, turning round to his son, and speaking to him in a cordial tone of voice:

"Come, young scapegrace, light your cigar."

The Viscount, as he moved towards the taper, said to his father:

"Now I know you again; but just now—I could have disowned you."

"What the devil can I say to you?" resumed the Count, with affected good-nature; "you have an answer for every thing. You beat me with my own weapons. I was playing most admirably my part of Géronte, as you call it, you good-for-nothing rogue; but it seems that part was a bad one."

"A most pitiful one! That will serve you as a lesson: however, cheer up; I will mend the breach in your election-canvas. You must become a member—it will be so diverting to see you one—so then a member you shall be—that's settled; and so shall I. We will be members."

"You too? indeed!"

"Not now: I am not yet a *serious man*, as your friend Guizot would say:—but when I shall owe a million of francs,—when I have eloped with a duchess and a petticoat politician (how droll it must be, a politician in petticoats),—when I have fought two more duels,—when I shall smoke the strongest tobacco, and drink the most burning liquors;—in a word, when I shall be entirely exhausted and worn out, I shall be a *serious man;* and your friend Guizot will then, in my turn, make me a member. When once, through his influence, I shall be a *young member*, like D'Armainville and Saint-Firmin, then you shall see my steady bearing. Stay—hear this."

And Scipio, raising his head, but lowering his eyes, said, with an air of disdainful arrogance, which the affected humility of his language only enhanced the more:

"'I request the House, which I have the honour to address for the first time, to permit me to tender my very humble, insignificant, and obscure support *to the King's Government*, &c. &c.' And on closing my ministerial speech: 'May I hope that the House will condescend to pardon my timid inexperience—I rely on the indulgence of the House—for its kindness, however great, can never exceed the deep respect I feel for itself.'"

Then, in his natural voice, the young jester added:

"Now after that, the devil take me if the following year your friend Guizot, who doats upon good spouters, does not send me as Minister-Plenipotentiary to Queen Pomoré. *Apropos*, confess that I for my part played the minister superbly, when I introduced you at Mabille's last year to Rosita, saying: 'Rosita, I present you my *papa*. We will all four sup with Magador.' But, no nonsense! I answer to my creditors for the author of my life."

"Silence, then! you young Tartar," said the Count; "please to drop all mention of our bachelor pranks, since we are going to get married."

In spite of his resolution, the Count could not suppress a slight agitation, as he darted at his son an uneasy and searching glance, and uttered the words:

"We are going to get married."

Scipio looked at his father very intently, lit a second cigar very leisurely, and replied:

"By the by, speaking of *our* marriage, confess you meant to dupe me?"

"I! what I! wanted to dupe you in your marriage?"

"This is it: a short time ago, thanks to you, my marriage was broken off with Mademoiselle de Francheville de Ormon; a fortune of three millions, one of the highest names in France; that was a suitable match. One hundred and fifty thousand francs a year—that could do no harm: a great name—that gives dignity, especially when a man's grandfather was an innkeeper at Clermont."

Although this sarcastic allusion to the family origin, habitual with Scipio, was particularly grating to the Count's pride, he was too much engrossed with his fears as to the consequences of this conversation to notice it; he replied, therefore:

"Well, I give up your grandfather to you—the innkeeper; serve him up, as you always do, with all kinds of seasoning; but come to the point—what are you driving at?"

"When that rich marriage was on the *tapis*, I was then diverting myself (unknown to you) by practising a little love with Raphaela Wilson."

"You?"

"Yes; I used to see her at her aunt's when we went to the morning games of that fat simpleton, Dunolard. A boarding-school love of that kind was agreeably exciting; but the match with three millions, an orphan, and a fine name, were most pleasant to think of; so I consented to marry as you wished me; which, of course, did not prevent me to continue to pay court to Raphaela. Suddenly you pulled the string, and the scene changed—the rich marriage became impossible, the three millions melted away, the young lady had changed her mind, so had her guardian; it was all a cock and a bull story invented by yourself, for you did not wish for the marriage."

"I assure you——"

"You wish to be a member? Then learn not to interrupt the orator; you shall speak after me. Mademoiselle de Francheville was at school at Sacré-Cœur; I could not see her—I could learn no tidings. So I did not marry, nor did I die of grief; but I was convinced that the author of my being had strangely duped me for his own personal views; and that he had acted towards me as Robert Macaire, leaving me to play the ungracious part of Gogo or Bertrand."

"Scipio!"

"Do n't interrupt the speaker. A short time after the rupture of the wealthy match, you came to speak to me again of marriage, and whom did you propose to me? Raphaela Wilson, my loving damsel! No fortune! no high birth! What! you propose such a match to me, Miss Nobody without fortune! You! I said directly: I have been robbed. But *let us dissemble*," added Scipio, with an accent of a traitor on the stage.

The Count turned pale—a dreadful pain smote his heart. He said to his son:

"Go on."

"For mere form's sake, I made some objections. 'Father, why break off a splendid marriage for so paltry a match?' 'Never mind, my son, you shall lose nothing by it; I will secure you an estate of 1500 francs a year, the third of my fortune, on your wedding-day.' At this generous conduct on the part of the author of my being, who, after all, was only giving me what must one day be my own, I appeared moved with gratitude, and decided to act. Still I was dissembling; and first of all as I suspect the little girl Wilson to have had a hand in it all, and as I do n't choose to be played upon, I doubled my protestations of love. I spoke to her of our coming marriage, and fired her brain; she accepted a *rendezvous*, and now, come what may, I have *covered my expenses*."

"Raphaela!" exclaimed the Count.

"What wonder!" resumed Scipio with astounding impudence, and pushing off the ash of his cigar

with his nail. "As for you," resumed he, casting a sardonic look on his father, "I kept telling you that I will marry, just to see the game in your hand: that was soon done; the queen of hearts was trumped. You are dying for the mother, who, taking advantage of your youth, probably made it a condition of her marriage with you, that I should wed the daughter. Very interesting: a party of four like our supper with Magador and Pomoré. Now, sir, comes the moral: at present, on my will depends your marriage with the object of your idolatry; and Raphaela has been my mistress. Say then, clever father, who is the dupe—you or I?"

"Pretty well argued, certainly," said the Count, repressing his inward dismay. "But you are playing for honour; and what then is the use of your having been the lover of Raphaela Wilson, and of holding, as you believe, my marriage in your hands?"

"How? what's the use of it? A great deal. I hold the secret of your passion; my will alone can satisfy it; I can make you dance to any tune I like."

"Your reasoning is most pitiful, my lad."

"Psha! psha!"

"Certainly; I admit that by refusing to marry Raphaela, you prevent my marrying her mother; what do you gain by that? Nothing. If the contrary happens, why display all this *finesse?* since you must consent to this union."

"Yes; but on what conditions? That 's what you do n't know yet."

"What are these conditions?"

"I shall not make them myself."

"Who then?"

"A charming woman."

"A woman!" repeated the Count, surprised.

"Yes, a woman who adores me, who interests herself greatly in my behalf; but as she is very eccentric, and not at all jealous of a wife, she wishes to discuss with you, and you alone, and secretly, the conditions of my marriage, and the articles of my contract."

"You are joking. Be it so. And what is this woman's name, who seems to have the heart of a *notary?*"

"Her name is Basquine."

Count Duriveau sprang up as if a serpent had stung him: indignation, anger, and horror burst through his face, which had just before been marked with affected cordiality.

"So then it is true. That horrid wretch whose part you took against me at dinner — you know her?"

"It is a month since I have had that honour. I did not wish to tell you so this evening before your electors."

"So then," cried the Count, with still increasing dismay, "you know that avaricious monster, that depraved and infamous hypocrite."

"Jealous," said Scipio, shrugging his shoulders; "I would have presented you, but I knew how deeply you were in love."

"And, perhaps too, you love this horrid creature."

"Like a madman." And Scipio's delicate features became flushed, and his large dark eyes sparkled. "What I adore in her is not her wonderful twofold talent as dancer and vocalist: I leave such admiration to the front boxes. What I adore in Basquine would you ever guess it? it is the very thing you lay to her charge, as others do, but, without any proofs: she is too perfect a rake to leave any proofs; what I adore in her is her outrageous depravity, her violent and infernal spirit, so splendidly concealed within the folds of her hypocrisy which makes her pass off for an angel and procures her the *entrée* to the drawing-room of the greatest prudes—highnesses and empresses. Well! to me, to me alone Basquine confessed her vices, because she judged me alone worthy of being their worshipper!" said Scipio, with abominable pride.

"The unhappy boy is lost; that loathsome creature has assailed him through the conceit of vice," muttered the Count, in affright.

"Yes, what I idolize in her," continued Scipio, with rising exultation, "is the contrast between that soul black as hell and that angelic face, crowned with its fair flaxen hair; and therefore I defended Basquine this evening against your accusations, in order that she may possess that halo of virtue which so much amuses us, and is so certain to dazzle the simple and the prudish. Now do you understand my idolatry for that demon? But, alas! platonic idolatry: for she has put off the *hour of bliss*—or, as she termed it, the devil's hour,—till after my marriage with Raphaela; a marriage which she, Basquine, wishes alone to settle the condition of with you. So, take care," added Scipio, in a voice of ruthless cruelty, "satisfy Basquine,—my marriage, consequently yours, depends on it,—otherwise, *no.*"

The Count thought he was sufficiently acquainted with Basquine's career to see in the depraved passion which she had inspired his son with, an abyss in which not only his own dearest hopes might be engulphed, but likewise the honour, the prospects, perhaps the life of Scipio. Suddenly, striking his forehead as if he had just remembered something, the Count drew from his pocket Bamboche's description, which one of the company had given him; on this paper it was stated that the prisoner, among other tatooings, bore these words on his chest above the heart:

"*Eternal love to Basquine.*"

The Count handed the paper to his son.

"Read—and you will see that that infamous woman was the mistress of an assassin—of the very bandit they were tracking this morning in my woods."

"What does it prove? that it was perhaps on her account that man became a robber and a murderer—I do n't wonder at it."

"But I, sir, am terrified on your account," cried the Count, standing straight up, with a threatening look, a haughty action, and an attitude of energetic decision.

Then as a smile of derision was sweeping the young man's mouth, the Count thundered forth:

"A truce with your raillery, your Géronte and Orgon! I have been weak, imprudent, base and criminal—yes, criminal; for I have allowed you with impunity to toss back in my face the dignity belonging to a father: but enough, I tell you,—it is enough, do you hear me?" cried the Count, whose invincible resolution was fearful to behold. "No more insolent or infamous debauchery, which the world winks at, and which I was mean enough to encourage by quoting my own example! You have exposed yourself at last to a monstrous passion, which might lead to disgrace and make you infamous; because to love that infernal creature is to love vice and depravity, and to run the hazard of some day committing a crime; because," then, breaking off with a violent impulse of indignation against himself, he added, "after all, I am very good natured to discuss the point with you. Is it a debateable question? You do n't know then that to dare to boast of your hateful love in my presence—that to dare to raise up a horrid creature as the arbiter of my fate and that of an angel of purity shamefully seduced,—you do n't know then, that to dare all this at twenty is to deserve instead of paternal indignation——"

"That of the *Father of all*—the thunderbolts of Jupiter you probably mean?" said Scipio tittering.

"No, imprisonment."

"Imprisonment?"

"Yes," cried the Count, driven beyond himself; "yes, if you force me to it, you shall surely learn, mordieu! what is meant by a house of correction

for you will not come of age for ten months! Yes a house of correction! with the hard prison discipline—you who scorn my authority,—and the prison fare,—you who are sated with good cheer,—with the prison garb—you, whom luxury has wearied! The transition will be sudden, and may well astonish you. I expected it would."

"Sudden? the transition! why no, not too much so," said Scipio, recovering his sedate composure, shaken for a moment: "from high comedy we are falling to the drama, from the drama to the house of correction—it savours a little of the Police Gazette—that's all."

"Yes, and I will take great care your name does not figure one day in that Gazette; although it may once have belonged to a poor innkeeper," said the Count, bitterly. "However ridiculous the name may appear to you, at any rate it shall not be spotted with shame. Ah! you think you have only come into the world, to misuse the privileges of wealth, and to be led by that abuse to abjure every thing that was a pleasure at the outset, and to plunge, as a last resource, into hideous depravity."

"I declare that reproach an absurdity," said the imperturbable Scipio, puffing the wreaths of smoke from his cigar; "you had, like me, no trouble but to come into the world in order to be rich and enjoy the venturesome labours of Grandfather Duriveau, an abominable usurer; and moreover a cheat under the *Directory*—more could not be said."

"You terrify me too much to mind your impertinence," cried the Count. "Ah! you speak of conditions? Listen to mine: you shall never more behold that abominable woman whose name you mentioned. You shall atone for a base seduction, by marrying Miss Wilson."

"In order that you may wed the mother!"

"I tell you you shall marry Miss Wilson; you shall stay here on this estate, as long as I please, two or three years, perhaps longer, without entering Paris. This sojourn—the affection of a woman endowed with the rarest qualities—my severe vigilance—will suffice to pacify your hot, feverish, perversity, which, after all, is but pitiful, because at your age, thank God! it cannot yet be incarnate vice, but a wild exaggeration, a melancholy monomania; and that is curable—since one can cure the mad. So be at rest; I will be your physician."

"You are very good; but, if I refuse to marry Miss Wilson? In other words, if I prevent you thus from marrying her mother?"

"Undeceive yourself:—do n't expect to have in your power a love which I confess—do you hear me, a love that I am proud of, because it is honour-

able. So then, if you refuse to make amends for your unworthy seduction, I will tell Mrs. Wilson frankly what you are: I will tell her of the shameless passion you have dared to acknowledge; and open her eyes as to the dreadful misfortunes which would befall her daughter by marrying you. And as, above all, Mrs. Wilson adores her child, she will esteem herself happy, too happy, both for her sake and her child's, to escape the future calamities you would prepare for her. This frank measure, far from being an obstacle to my union with Mrs. Wilson, will strengthen still more the noble affection which unites us. Your profound deceit had not seen the matter in this light. What a pity!"

Scipio shrugged his shoulders; and, resuming the deplorable advantage which he seemed to have lost, he answered the Count with bitter irony.

"I am truly sorry to abuse my superiority; but really you do n't play your best cards. You forget that Raphaela has been my mistress: and besides, you do n't know—what I learned on reading this evening a small note which she gave me during the hunt—you do n't know, alas! that the dear girl will perhaps shortly be—as they say every year of Queen Victoria—'*in an interesting state.*'"

"It 's a scandalous lie: but I see your drift."

"Read this," said Scipio to his father, handing him a note.

The Count read it, and was astounded.

"Now then, you see, to save herself from dying, no longer of mere love, but of shame, Raphaela will be glad to marry me at any price," said Scipio. "Therefore, whatever you may say about me to her mother, Mrs. Wilson, urged on by her daughter, who will possibly confess every thing, will be doubly desirous of my marriage with Raphaela, and will make it more than ever the condition of yours. You are, therefore, more than ever in my power. Come, own to me that you have acted like a rash thoughtless fellow, which by the by only makes you *more youthful.* As for your threat of a house of correction—for a man of sense like you, it was vulgar and brutal—that 's all."

In spite of his prodigious assurance, Scipio's reasoning, as to his father's marriage, was logically sound; and the Count was for a while abashed. Then, driven beyond all bounds by the bold insolence of his son,—by anger, and the violent resentment which he had so long harboured in his mind—pale, bewildered, silent with rage,—giving vent at last to the turbulence of his temper, he sprang towards his son with uplifted hand.

"Take care!" cried Scipio, without yielding an inch, and boldly eyeing his father: "it is no longer Géronte and Damis; but two men, pitted against each other!"

Fortunately, two or three loud knocks, outside the bed-room door, made the Count let fall his arm; he wiped the sweat from his brow, stood silent a moment; then in a voice still tremulous, he said:

"Who 's there?"

"'T is I, Beaucadet," returned the pompous officer.

"Well, sir!" cried the Count, "it is very strange that you should come and pursue me in my privacy."

"It is a question of life or death," returned the *gendarme.*

The Count, on hearing this assurance, went to the door and let in the officer; whilst Scipio took and lit a fresh cigar, and buried himself in an arm-chair.

"A question of life or death?" he hastily repeated to Beaucadet, who entered with looks of mysterious import.

"Yes, my lord Count, it may affect many unless care be taken; but I, as the vigilant sentinel of justice, I will watch with open eyes."

"But come to the point: what is the matter?" inquired the Count, impatiently.

"You have, my lord, a *valet-de-chambre,* named Martin?"

"Yes."

"He was slightly wounded this evening."

"Yes, yes."

"I have just examined the said valet, who seemed to me already a suspicious character."

"Martin?"

"Yes, my lord Count. According to the evasive and equivocal replies of the said Martin, I have reason to believe that he forms a part of band of malefactors, in which Bamboche and Bête-Puante are the prime movers."

"What! he—Martin! Are you mad?" said the Count, shrugging his shoulders. "I had the best character with that man!"

"But you do n't know then that the said Martin was the intimate of Bamboche, seeing that the latter bears the name of Martin on his beggarly chest: the present description will prove it to you."

"Ah, true!" returned the Count, remembering the circumstance.

"What! does worthy Bamboche bear the name of Martin tatooed, as well as that of Basquine?" said the Viscount, concealing his astonishment beneath a tone of mockery and defiance; for he felt he was braving his father when he used the name of Basquine. "Martin is then in very good company: but who told my worthy *gendarme,* that your Martin is our Martin?"

"It must be he, Viscount," answered Beaucadet: "my quarter-master feelings tell me so." Then, turning towards Duriveau, "Therefore, let us use stratagem, Count! to trap the knaves. We must not sound the alarm; rest in quiet: only have a pair of pistols, a carbine, and a good hunting-knife, beneath your pillow: in fine, a little care and patience, and in less than five days, I give you my word, we shall know the truth; inasmuch as we shall have clutched the accomplices of that beggarly lout, who suffered my *gendarmes* to bow to him."

"To-morrow I will see you again; we will talk about it," said the Count to Beaucadet, approaching towards the door.

"To-morrow morning I shall respectfully wait upon you."

And thereupon the officer withdrew.

Scipio, during this colloquy, had sat quietly smoking in his chair; the only notice he took of it was by shrugging his shoulders several times. When Beaucadet had left, he said to his father with cutting irony:

"We left off with a rather threatening gesture on your side. You were going, I believe, to raise your hand against me."

"I was wrong; and I beg your pardon," said the Count, coldly. "Violence is no proof. I prefer telling you these few simple words: In a fortnight from this, without any stipulation, and without leaving this house, you shall have married Miss Wilson."

"Psha! quietly married? and that way too?"

"You will marry her that way; quietly, without a word," returned the Count, with perfect composure.

"You have no one else to marry me to?" inquired Scipio, rising.

"Nobody."

"In that case, good night," said the Viscount, moving towards the door; but when he had reached it, he turned about with his hand on the knob, and said to his father:

"I say, do n't go and dream about Mrs. Wilson; that would be unlucky."

The Count made no reply.

Scipio went out sneering.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SALE.

THREE days have elapsed since Bruyere threw herself into the pond on the farm.

The sun is setting. An unwonted bustle pervades the farm; all the implements of labour, carts, harrows, ploughs, harnesses, &c. &c. are symmetrically arranged upon a mound outside the buildings: no great distance off, the lean herd of the farm cows is drawn up in a line along a fence of stakes and cross-pieces of fir-tree. In another part, the magnificent turkeys, lately under the guardianship of Bruyere, together with the geese, are inclosed in a pound, hastily contrived. Here the farm horses, with their lean and lanky sides, are seen tied up to a few scattered trees.

The people of the farm wander here and there with wild and anxious looks: some bring up sacks of corn, others sacks of oats, which they then deposit round a scale fixed to a cross-beam, and intended to weigh them.

Two men, covered with blue smock-frocks over their black coats, were present at this unusual formality. One of them was a kind of officer over the other; he had a cunning, fussy look; his cap came down to his ears; on his long nose a pair of barnacles; he had a small debt-book in his hand, in which, after having examined, and felt them over, with the eye and the hand of a master, he set down the number of the farm cattle: after this task, he directed his attention to the agricultural implements, and noted them likewise in the debt-book; then he passed on to the sacks of corn and oats, and after weighing them, set them down like the rest, as was finally done with the forage remaining in the tattered barn; it was all counted, sack by sack, and truss by truss, under the inspection of that surveyor, who was no other than Monsieur Herpen, one of the king's officers, at once an exciseman and a bailiff, at Salbres, assisted by his clerk; and both preparing, by an appraisement close at hand, to seize upon the goods and chattels of Master Chervin, the farmer of Grand-Genévre. A large yellow posting-bill, waving in the breeze, and nailed to the door of the farm-yard, announced that this sale, by order of the court, would take place at the said farm on the Sunday following, after mass.

The king's officer having concluded the valuation of the humble property contained on the farm, was about to enter Master Chervin's cottage, when an aged woman, miserably clad, with a whiteish face, and eyes reddened by tears, hastened down the few broken mossy steps leading to the door: there, timid and supplicating, she clasped her hands together, and said to the bailiff, as she obstructed his passage:

"My dear good sir—I entreat you now——"

"Well, what is it? Any more of your hypocritical lamentations? tears again?" grumbled the king's officer, with impatient abruptness: "what the devil would you have me do in the matter? You owe your rent; you can't pay; so the Count has seized upon your goods, and will turn you out of the farm; it's his right."

"Very true, my dear good sir, very true," answered the poor woman; "we cannot pay, so our goods are seized upon—we are turned out: I can't object."

"You can't object? thank you for the permission, truly. If you could object, it would be all one. Besides that, the Count is a likely man to give way to threats. He knows nothing but the law and his rights. He wants to pay what he owes, and he wants others to pay what they owe him;—and that's fair."

"Alas! I know it well that he is right, since our goods are seized upon and we are turned out."

"Well, then, let me finish my inventory," said the king's officer, waving his hand to bid the woman give way to him, and not prevent his entrance. "I must now proceed to appraise your furniture; that's the last part of the job: night is coming on. I don't want to be benighted among these wild heaths of yours, and these marshes; for they have not yet been able to lay hands on that scoundrel Bamboche: in spite of all pursuit, he still skulks in the neighbourhood; and I should not like such a meeting."

So saying, the king's officer made another attempt to ascend the steps.

"My dear good sir, don't come up! for the love of God, don't come up!" cried the poor woman, clasping her hands with terror.

"And why must I not come up?"

"Alas! God help us, my poor man is in bed: he had the fevers already when our poor little Bruyere was lost; and then besides—the news of this execution—all together gave him so much trouble, that for the last five days he has not stirred. If he saw you come in, my dear good sir, it would be too hard a blow."

"He must be very tender, then, father Chervin. When he is engaging himself at the fair, on market day, and raises his glass with a comrade, he don't complain of fevers. Come, I must take note of your furniture—so cut it short."

"My good sir, my dear and worthy sir, it would kill my poor man. Our furniture! I will tell you what there is—it won't take long."

"Why, truly," said the king's officer, seeing the sun ready to set, and remembering he had to go upwards of six miles through forest and heathland, absolutely deserted, which might offer an excellent hiding-place for the dreadful Bamboche; "truly, I must return on Friday; I will wait till then to appraise the furniture; but I will take them down now: so begin."

"There is our wedding cupboard," said the poor woman, with a deep sigh.

"A walnut-tree cupboard?"

"Yes, my worthy gentleman. Oh! you are very good and——"

"Our *mè*."

"How! What is that?"

"Our bread-bin."

"Oh! very good: old or new?"

"We have had it twelve years in use."

"Go on."

"Our bed."

"The law leaves you your bed. Go on."

"And, then, that's all, my dear good sir."

"Then, good-bye, till Friday."

After which, calling his clerk, the king's officer said to him:

"Quick, Benjamin, make haste; there's the sun nearly set; it will take us above an hour to reach home. The moor is deserted; and, thanks to that robber Bamboche, whom the devil plague, the country is not safe."

So speaking, the bailiff and his clerk left the farm-yard, and betook themselves quickly to the road, hoping to get back before night-fall.

"Go along, and the devil twist your necks, ominous birds!" cried honest Robin after them, when she was pretty sure that the two men could hear her no longer; for she partook of the kind of fear mixed with aversion that the king's officers inspire among those poor country people.

"And so, then, on Sunday night, Master Chervin, the farmer, will be neither more nor less than a day labourer like us, at twenty sous, with his smock frock for a house, like a beetle," said one of the farm-servants, driving the horses before him into the stable; "where was the use of his being a farmer for thirty years? After all, *it serves him right.*"

"Why then does it serve him right?" asked La Robin.

"Well! *he is a master,*" answered the carter.

"What then?"

"Why! it's always funny to see a master in trouble."

"And besides all, he is so severe, Master Chervin; is he not?" said La Robin, shrugging her shoulders. "Why, he's as soft as a hen, and would not dare say a word to a child; he always paid us our wages, and pinched himself to do it."

"Never mind! for all that he's a master," answered the carter, with dogged stupidity; "and it amuses me to see a master in trouble: that's my way of thinking."

This answer provoked La Robin very much, and made the other carter laugh outright; who repeated:

"Aw, aw, aw! it amuses us, to see a master in trouble."

"Don't we always require a master?" asked La Robin, in a fury.

"Exactly so," continued the farm-labourer: "that's why it's so droll to see them in trouble—those masters—since we must have them; and since they come to the fair to hire us, where we are shut up in a fold like so many calves."

Here the laughter was renewed.

For lack of better argument, La Robin, in her passion, gave the jesters two or three lusty kicks on the legs with her wooden shoes, crying out:

"So you are nothing better than two big calves!"

But La Robin's kicks proved more weighty arguments with her opponents than the finest reasonings; and the jolly carter, albeit he rubbed his legs a little, answered, as if to an objection:

"That's your way of thinking, La Robin! Very good; but I can have mine, too—my way."

"No, you heartless loon! you ought not to laugh when our poor Master Chervin is in his trouble."

"Me! I only laugh because he is a master; yes, as a cat is a cat; as a dog is a dog."

"What cat? what dog?" said La Robin, angrily.

"Well! a master is a master; and a servant is a servant; don't you see, La Robin?" resumed the labourer: "as it is with dog and cat, they both live under one roof, they eat out of the same trencher; but each of them has its own way, *and nothing can make them agree.*

* * * * * *

Through the crass ignorance and brutishness in which, like thousands of his brethren, this wretched boor was condemned to live, his instinct had a glimpse of the sad truth which, if it does not serve to justify, sometimes serves to explain, the indifference, the distrust, nay even the aversion, with which the farm-labourer generally looks upon the *master* who employs him. For, as the labourer said in his simplicity: nothing can unite the master and the labourer; between them there is no communion, no brotherhood, *no* link of association; in a word, there is nothing to interest the labourer in the good or ill success of his master's cultivation: let the harvest be plentiful or scarce—for the labourer, it is all one; the farmer neither raises nor lowers his wages. It is the same with the lease-farmer: in his dealings with his proprietor there is no fellowship, no bond of union: good or bad year, the farmer has to pay his rent, or else he is sold up and expelled; so that this distrust, this instinctive aversion, which separates the agricultural labourer from the farmer, likewise seems to divide the farm-tenant from the owner of the land.

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When the bailiff was gone, the farmer's wife had returned into that front chamber of the hut where Master Chervin lodged.

In that room, which was tolerably spacious, with a very low ceiling, a few hurdles, suspended from the rafters blackened by the smoke, contained two rows of rancid cheeses, whilst at the other end, the sunken ceiling exposed through the thick cobwebs, the hay which filled the loft.

During the day-time, the light could only find its way in through the upper panel of the door, a sliding panel, but without a glass-pane. At night they closed the shutter. The walls, increviced here and there, were plastered with moist patching of brown soil; the rough, uneven floor, entirely consisting of trodden earth, let up the water in several places.

On one side of this chamber, stood a high chimney if chimney it could be called, what was really but a wide brick pipe, four or five feet from the ground, jutting from the wall, and over a hearth made of a large stone on which the fire was kindled, as in the hovel of a savage; so that the least blast of wind blew back the smoke into that room already so insalubrious.

That evening, in order to abate in some degree the damp piercing cold of autumn, which invaded the room, they had laid upon the hearth, cross-ways over each other, two dead saplings, of fir tree, whose earthy roots extended half through the room; this wood, which was still green, instead of burning, turned to charcoal and emitted a sharp black smoke.

Not far from the chimney stood a worm-eaten bread-bin, and above it, on a mouldy shelf, a few articles of broken crockery; opposite to these things was a large cupboard of walnut wood; finally, in the back part of the room stood a bed of enormous height consisting of a straw mattress three feet thick and a thin mattress of uncombed wool; a wooden bench, a ricketty table, and two or three stools made up the furniture of the hut, scantily lighted by a single candle stuck in an old grated lantern, for it was night.

Such was Master Chervin's abode,—the farm tenant of the rich Count Duriveau, and such in general is the dwelling-house of every farmer in Sologne. The poor man seemed to be sleeping, whilst his wife, kneeling before the fire, endeavoured to kindle a flame by blowing with all her might on the smoking embers. Not being able to bring it about, she squatted down before the hearth, her chin resting on her knees, turning round from time to time towards the bed where her husband lay slumbering.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE FARMER'S WIFE.

ALL at once, Master Chervin uttered a long, deep groan, turning about on his hard damp bed. He was about sixty, with a mild honest countenance; his complexion was of a pale, leaden colour, his eyes hollow, his lips whiteish; his hair was grey, and not having been cut for a considerable time, it stood out thick and stiff on his wrinkled skin.

His wife, hearing him mutter and turn about, ran to his bed-side, and said to him:

"You are not asleep, my poor man?"

"Alas! God help me! mother, I was dreaming of the *King's gentleman*. Is he gone?"

"Yes, he wanted to come in and take note of our furniture, but I begged him so much not to rouse you, that he wrote down our things as I named them to him, and then went away.

"It's all over, then—it's all over then!" muttered the farm-tenant groaning: "all gone! What will become of us?"

"Alas! alas! I don't know, my poor man."

"And I so weak too—the fevers have undermined me. Ah! It's my own fault too—it's my own fault!"

"Your fault?"

"Yes; when last year, seeing the fine crops I had gathered by listening to the good advices of that poor little Bruyere, the Count's collector asked me for a complement for himself, and an increase of

rent, because my lease was out; I ought not to have renewed it on such terms; it was our ruin,—for before that, all we could do was to make both ends meet, without putting by a penny: and for one good crop we have had—thanks to Bruyere—we have had many bad ones, for want of money to manure the land. Therefore, the complement soaked up all the profit of that good crop; and this year's crop, though a fine one too, leaves us two quarters behind, because the rent is now too heavy for me. Ah! my old father was very right to say, '*Never improve your husbandry, my poor lad, for if you do, your landlord will double your rent and charge you double what you get by the improvement.*' My father was a wise man, and I am a fool.

"The Count must be badly off for money, very badly off indeed, to distrain for his rent and sell our little all, and turn us out, after so many years."

"Why, yes, we must suppose he wants it. And then, it's his right, and according to law; as the *King's gentleman* said."

"But, away from here, my poor man, how are we to live? You are too weak to work as a day labourer now; and as for me, what I should gain on the land, if I met with work, would not supply a fourth part of our bread."

"That 's true."

"What shall we do then?

"Alas! God help us! I do not know."

"And yet," replied the farmer's wife with fretful impatience, after a rather long pause, "they cannot suffer two poor old people, who have done nobody wrong, to be suddenly turned adrift without bread or shelter; no, no, they cannot suffer that."

"Who is it that cannot suffer it, good mother?"

"I do n't know; but honest God-fearing people ought not to be thus forsaken by every body."

"All the unfortunate say the same, mother, to themselves."

"Yes," replied she with bitter anguish, '*Live if you can, die if you like,*'—such is the proverb."

"Certainly; but such is our lot. Whom are we to complain to? of whom? the Count? He is in his right—it is not our fault that we cannot pay him, nor his neither."

"He raised our rent too high."

"We ought not to have signed the lease."

"That's true."

"You see, the Count is the lord—we are his farmers. If we are unfortunate, what can that signify to him? We must suppose that among lords they help each other: every man is with his class and for his class—he is not our brother to help us."

"Very true," said the wife with humble and simple resignation, "if we had any other master than the Count, it would be all the same thing. We must not reproach him; but, alas! it is very hard for us. And poor old Jemmy, to whom we gave a shelter and a mouthful to eat, what will become of him too?"

"Why, mother, as long as we could, we assisted him, now they turn us out. Poor old fellow! It will be with him as with us, to trust to God's grace."

"It is not because I regret we assisted him, that I say this."

"I know it perfectly well, mother; what I regret, is the little trifle I used to lay out in the towns at the wine-shop, on fair days and market days, when I went to sell our stock. If we had that money now!"

"You blame yourself for a bottle of wine and a little meat, when you had almost starved through the whole week working so hard, my poor man!"

"For all that, mother, add little to little, and it comes to much in the end; and on those days, whilst I was drinking a few glasses of wine and treating myself to a slice of meat, you, mother, had nothing else but the sorry well-water, and the sour curds with a lump of black bread. But misfortune teaches us; oh! yes—it teaches us—and——"

"Listen," cried his wife suddenly interrupting him, and at the same time attentively listening herself.

The old couple remained silent and listened.

Then in the midst of the deep silence of the night they heard resounding after two different intervals the shrill cry of the Sologne Eagle.

"It 's Bête-Puante," said the wife, "it 's his signal. He comes perhaps to tell me of that dear Madam Perrin. Perhaps her madness, which returned the same day that our poor little Bruyere died, has left her. Bête-Puante can tell, perhaps, for he is always anxious about Dame Perrin.

The cry which Bête-Puante used as a signal having been once more repeated, the old woman took up a lantern and hastened out; she reached the narrow *jetée* which lined the pond near the old bake-house; then she raised her lantern three times up in the air, after which she blew it out and stood waiting.

CHAPTER IX.

THE POACHER.

A CALM and lovely moonlight threw its silver beams over the surface of the pond; and soon in that glittering expanse the farmer's wife descried the dark shadow of a man, sometimes walking at full height, sometimes bending down, shading along through the reeds and coming towards the farm.

After the lapse of a few seconds, Bête-Puante issued from the rushes among which he had crept, and climbed up the bank where the old woman awaited him in alarm.

"Is Martin come?" asked the poacher.

The woman, instead of answering the question, clasped her hands and cried out:

"Alas! so it 's you, Monsieur Bête Puante. I thought they had returned into the thick woods: do n't you know that Beaucadet and his *gendarmes*——"

"Is Martin come?" repeated the poacher impatiently, and interrupting her.

"No, Monsieur Bête-Puante," answered she; "not yet."

Then she added with timid hesitation:

"I dare not ask you to come into our cottage, Monsieur Bête Puante for I know you do n't like to enter a house."

"What of the good old man?" inquired the poacher, without heeding her apology.

"Alas! God help us," said she, sadly, "my poor husband gets weaker and weaker. Since the day the *gendarmes* came to arrest Bruyere, and she drowned herself, the dear man has never once got up, so great was the shock he felt. We were so fond of her, poor little girl!"

"She is dead, quite dead—let us think no more of it," said the poacher, quickly, in a hollow voice.

"And when one thinks that her poor little body has not even been found!"

"No, no, they could never have found it," answered the poacher; "there are whirlpools in the pond, and her body has been carried down them."

Then, as if desirous of breaking off this subject, he added:

"So, the good man is no better?"

"What could you expect? Monsieur Bête-Puante, the death of that dear girl, the sale they are going to hold in our farm,—all together drives him distracted,—we do n't know what will become of us."

Here this poor woman wiped away her tears, which she had the spirit to check in presence of her sick husband.

"Yes, they are going to sell all off, because you cannot pay your rent. That 's justice," said the poacher, with a bitter sneer: "you are to die in some

hole or corner, after forty years' labour and honesty—that 's law!"

"Alas! so it is; we do n't deceive ourselves; the Count is in the right."

"I should think he is—the amount of your rent crushes you. The den in which they have enclosed you is so unwholesome, that you have contracted incurable fever: age, misfortune, have dwindled your strength; so then, tramp away—off with you, wretches: your very shirt shall be sold; fortunately your skin holds to your body, otherwise the king's officer would take it. But what is to be done? your lord and master is in his right."

"Alas, so he is!"

"Nobody can blame him, Count Duriveau?"

"No, surely!"

"Alas, so he is! 'No, surely!' cried the poacher, with a mocking laugh. "That 's what they all answer. One flays them alive—what 's to be done? The butcher is in his right; the proof is, he snatches off our skin."

"How strangely you speak, Monsieur Bête-Puante!"

"Because the Count is so wortny a man, and his son so charming a youth! I love them dearly, do you see: but enough on that head. The good man Chervin must not let himself sink and keep his bed; he must get up, walk out, and take heart. The sale is not over — and between this and to-morrow, there 's a long space."

"How is the good man to gather strength to get up, Monsieur Bête-Puante? he can't eat any thing; the *curds* turn on his stomach."

No wonder," resumed Bête-Puante, with another sneer; "for since forty years he eats nothing but that with black bread, steeped in well-water."

"It is not that my poor dear man is nice, Monsieur Bête-Puante, but——"

"Silence, poor sheep," said the poacher, with a strange mixture of wild irony and kind feeling; "you would make me cruel towards the wolves."

Then the poacher, thrusting his hand into one of the deep pockets of his great coat, took out a splendid cock pheasant, with the noose of string in which he had been caught, still round his neck.

"Here is a cock two years old; you must put him in your pan and let him boil there for three or four hours, with a handful of salt and a sprig of thyme out of the woods. It will turn out the best broth for the good man that a patient can drink, and will set him on his legs again."

"Alas! God help us! so you still go on poaching, Monsieur Bête-Puante," cried the woman with terror, and holding mechanically by the neck the pheasant the poacher had given her. "But you forget the keepers and the *gendarmes*. They have sworn to kill you, Monsieur Bête-Puante, if they catch you. So take care."

"And when he has drunk this pheasant broth," continued the poacher, without regarding the poor woman's terror, "he will be better: if he is ill, it is partly through want."

"But, Monsieur Bête-Puante, this pheasant belongs to the Count; it comes from his woods; it 's his own—it would be wrong for us to——"

"Do n't be uneasy; it belongs also to Providence, who created it for us all. Besides, your noble master has more game than he needs; his servants despise it, and even his very dogs——"

"But Monsieur Bête-Puante——"

"When I tell you his dogs won't touch it—take it!" cried the poacher, adding: "with this broth, your good man must eat one of these tenches which you will broil on charcoal — it is both nice and nourishing."

So saying, the poacher took out of his pocket two glorious tenches, round and plump, and a foot long; a rush drawn through the gills held them together, so that the poacher had only to place them a-straddle—so to speak—over the woman's wrist, where they sat swinging beside the pheasant.

"Holy Virgin!" cried she, "so you have been laying your nets in the ponds, in spite of the *gendarmes* and all."

At that moment, thanks to his fine and practised sense of hearing, the poacher could distinguish in the distance, behind the farm, a sound of steps, audible to him alone, who possessed the keen sense of a savage.

"It is Martin, no doubt; leave us together."

So saying, the poacher gently pushed the farmer's wife into the cottage, still holding in her hand the pheasant and the two tenches; after which he was left alone, hard by the dilapidated bake-house.

For some time after Bête-Puante walked about, gloomy and thoughtful, sometimes listening to Martin's steps, which drew nearer every moment, at others casting a piercing glance to the other side of the pond, where after a few seconds only, the distant sound of a heavy and growing fall of water was heard through the darkness.

A moment after Martin appeared among the ruins of the bake-house; on perceiving the poacher, who was walking towards him, he ran up to him, and, hugging him in his arms, he said in a touching voice:

"Forgive me, Claude, forgive me."

"What should I forgive you for, my child?" inquired the poacher, in a voice of fatherly tenderness.

"Alas! Claude, it was three days ago, when after making your way into the park, and stealing up to the castle to endeavour to see me and inform me——"

Here Martin paused a moment, and started; he then continued in a sorrowful voice:

"To inform me of that cruel event which your next day's letter——"

Again Martin broke off; he could not proceed. His tears were choking him.

"Cheer up, my boy," said the poacher, "cheer up. As for the accident of that evening—say no more about it. You saw me rise up fiercely—just when Duriveau was exposing like a cynic his hateful principles to his company. You trembled for his life—you sprang out upon me—the weapon in my hand went off—and thence all the uproar."

"You are over kind, Claude; but I am to blame, for having in my foolish alarm been able to think you capable of murder:—you, of all men, Claude!"

"I swear to you by the God who hears us, my child," said the poacher, in a solemn tone of voice, "that hurried away by a just indignation, I merely intended before all his guests, to give him a last fearful warning, and to exclaim aloud: 'Repent, repent! there is still time.'"

"You need not swear any thing to me," cried Martin, interrupting the poacher; "you, Claudius, a murderer! you——"

"The day will come when I shall be both avenger and judge," said the poacher, in a hollow voice; "I shall exercise an awful right;—but a murderer!—never!"

"I know it, Claude," answered Martin. "Oh! I must, I repeat, have been struck with vertigo to have conceived such fears; but the violent language used by the Count, and the strong cause you have to hate him——"

"Presently we will speak of the Count," said the poacher, hurriedly. "How is your mother?"

"I have not been able to see her as yet," replied Martin, with painful dejection: "I was afraid of giving her too great a shock. The person to whose house she was conveyed the day before yesterday, sent me word this morning that my mother's state had not altered for the worse."

The poacher heaved a deep sigh, and let his head fall. Martin, a prey to the same grief, did not per-

ceive a tear that trickled down his companion's face, and was lost in his grey beard.

Overcoming his emotion, Martin resumed, after a short silence:

"What of Bruyere, my poor sister?"

"As I wrote to you, she is quite out of danger—she is only a little weak. To-morrow, you will be able to see her."

"Poor child!" said Martin bitterly; "I have only learned her existence to know, at the same time, the misfortune which has so soon polluted it—and she so young. But you do not deceive me, Claude? I shall see her to-morrow? Does she run no more risk?"

"No; her youth was enabled to support these many shocks. Her health is good, I tell you, as truly, as that I drew her out of that cursed pond."

"Yes, Claude, brave Claude! there's another debt we owe you. Still and for ever I meet you in my path as a tutelary genius," said Martin, earnestly holding out his hands to the poacher, who pressed them with friendly warmth; "but your letter was written in too much haste for you to tell me in it how you contrived to rescue my sister from almost certain death?"

"I was hidden in the wood, and witnessed the horrible scene of the discovery of the child," resumed the poacher. "On hearing the *gendarme* declare that he was going to the farm, to arrest Bruyere, I hoped to get before him. I was acquainted with shorter bye-paths than the common road; when once near the house, I expected by uttering a cry, well known to your sister, to draw her out and give her timely warning; unfortunately the soldiers came so fast, that Bruyere did not hear my signal. Having arrived too late, and wishing to hide myself, I skulked amid the reeds of yonder deep pit,—it is separated from the pond only by that flood-gate. It was a providential inspiration."

"What followed?"

"By the light of the moon, I saw her fling herself into the pond. In a moment I felt sure I could save her; I hastened to let down the gate, near the spot where your sister had fallen. The water began to spread and expend in this ditch; a current was immediately formed, which brought the poor girl, still struggling for life, close to where I was; with one hand I seized on her; with the other I again lifted up the gate; the water ceased to flow; then raising your sister in my arms like a child, I continued to grope along the ditch until I could issue from it unseen; then, I made through the wood, reached one of my hiding holes, and what followed you know."

"And in the mean time, they sought in vain for the body of the poor creature, whom their infamous accusation had driven to suicide?" said Martin, unable to repress his tears.

"The villains! to talk of infanticide. What she!" cried the poacher; "she, poor little thing, who yielding to an irresistible sentiment of shame and terror, had managed to conceal the child's birth; she who, with miraculous courage, used to come twice a day to suckle it in my cave, three miles from the farm; but, seeing, in spite of both our cares, that the little innocent was wasting away in that damp, close cavern, I conceived the fatal idea of taking the child to Vierzin, where there was formerly an asylum for these foundlings. At this proposal who can paint the frightful despair of that young mother of sixteen,—her sobs, her heart-rending cries; at length her son's safety prevailed with her. We set out; she accompanied me almost the whole of the first day, sometimes suckling her child, at others kissing it or bathing it with tears. When the moment was come for her to leave it, I thought she would never have had the courage, and yet she resigned herself to it. But before I had gone twenty yards she ran after me. 'Another kiss,' said she; 'it shall be the last;' and then to hear her sighs, her bitter sobs, as her fond kisses fell upon its cheeks. She sunk exhausted by the road-side. I started again; and soon I heard quick steps behind me—it was she once more. "Oh! this shall be the last!" So that I, who never weep, could not help weeping. At length she left me to return to the farm. I arrived at Vierzin: the asylum was broken up for the sake of economy. Living far away in the woods, I had not heard of this new feat of honest calculation."

"Indeed?" said Martin astonished.

"Yes! they have withdrawn this last refuge, which a true Christian priest had opened to the misery, the shame, the repentance of seduced females. And it was shut up for good reasons too: they knew well, those who did so, that they were thus devoting to certain death the majority of these children, who would have met with maternal care in that humble asylum. But, for such creatures, destined from their birth to pernicious penury, where is the use of their living? said these prudential calculators. Is there not already *too many of the people? Too many guests compete as it is, for the banquet of life*, as Duriveau declared the other night, when he quoted the execrable maxims of the saints. 'Well! we must shut up these asylums; *there will* be,' said these child murderers, '*so much less of the people.*'"

"Ah! Claude, this is frightful!" said Martin, concealing his face in his hands.

"O let us hate them!" cried the poacher; "yes, shame and execration on the world wherein the coming of another of God's creatures is not blest as a divine gift, and greeted with equal gratitude and attention. Yes, let us curse the world wherein the poor deserted child is looked upon as a burden; fatal and dangerous to society because *he is forcibly handed over to misery, ignorance, misfortune, and crime.* Let us curse the world which takes from us almost the right to complain of the death of your sister's child—so sad is the condition that awaited him in life! And yet," resumed the poacher, yielding to a fit of involuntary tenderness, "if you did but know what it is to see a poor innocent creature dwindle by degrees, lose its colour, and expire before your eyes. No, I cannot tell you the torture of my heart during that night when, after having vainly knocked at the door of the asylum where I hoped to leave your sister's child, I strove in vain to bring him back. Alas! sick as he was and tried by the journey, he would have lived had he met with the eager care which his weakness and helplessness required. But no; there was no nurse to tend him at that late hour: the night was cold, and the rain poured down—no house was open. I could feel his little limbs grow stiff and frozen; I tried to warm them with my breast: he was shaken with convulsions; then there issued from his mouth a little soft and plaintive moaning; he smiled in my face as if smiling on the angels of the skies, and so he died."

After a moment's silence, which Martin had not strength to interrupt, the poacher went on in a firmer voice:

"I conceived it a duty of piety to return your sister her child. For a mother it is still something to be allowed to pray and weep over her child's grave! So I returned with my sad burden to my cave. The day that I returned from Vierzin a fatal mischance discovered my retreat; I had not been able to give Bruyere the tidings: the poor girl learned at once that her boy was dead, and that she was accused of its murder; it was too much for a thing so gentle, and she fain would have died.

"Now," continued the poacher, "you know the victim's sufferings: to-morrow you will learn the base cruelty of the betrayer; you will hear by what violent and scandalous treachery your sister was subdued, and ruined, one day—only one day—polluted and still chaste. This terrific narrative which

shame and fear prevented her from disclosing, and which to me only, with death-like embarrassment, she revealed—your sister shall unfold to you, her natural avenger, for the hour is come."

"What hour is come, Claude?"

"That of a great example," answered the poacher in a solemn voice.

Suddenly, Martin exclaimed: "Claude, do n't you hear the galloping of several horses?"

"I have heard it this quarter of an hour, for my ear is more practised than yours."

"But what is it?" said Martin anxiously.

"It's the *gendarmes* who are looking for me," answered Claude. "They are coming here to arrest me."

The poacher appeared so indifferent to the danger that threatened him, that Martin, looked at him amazedly, and cried out:

"They come to arrest you, and yet you stay here, Claude?"

Bête-Puante, without answering him, took Martin by the arm, led him beyond the ruins of the bake-house, walked a few steps along the bank with him, and pointed out to him in the distance, on the opposite side of the pond, by the light of the moon, several *gendarmes* galloping along, and taking their way directly towards the farm.

"The *gendarmes!*" cried Martin; "fly, Claude, fly."

"What I have to say to you is too serious."

"But in ten minutes they will be here."

Bête-Puante shook his head.

"What will prevent them?" inquired Martin.

"The sluice. Hark!"

And truly, as Martin did listen, he heard amidst the deep silence of the night the distant bubble of a heavy fall of water.

"Then you have lifted up the gate, Claude?"

"Yes, about an hour ago, when, coming here, I saw the horsemen appear at the angle of the pond; for the road they were upon showed they were coming in quest of me."

"Then, you are right, my friend; the bank is inundated, and the soldiers will be compelled to turn back."

"And when once they are engaged among the marshes and the bogs which lay near the pond on this side, it will take them an hour to join us; and in an hour I shall be out of their reach. Now then, listen to me."

"I attend to you. Speak, Claude."

CHAPTER X.

THE JUDGE.

It was a few months ago that I was informed for the first time of the secret of your birth; you were then in a foreign country; I wrote to you; you returned to France. I told you of Durivean's villainous conduct to your mother, whom he had driven mad through despair—by tearing you from her to devote you, in your early childhood, to the most miserable life. I explained to you how, after having stabbed me to the heart with a cruel injury—me who had never done him any wrong—Durivean, my evil genius, had smitten me a second time in my honour."

"I know it all; it was infamous, Claude, absolutely infamous."

"I told you how, at length, and by his own confession, I had in my hands—the life of that man; who, pale, and resigned, awaited his death which I had a right to inflict; but putting faith in his promise sworn to, I allowed him to live."

At this word, Martin's features expressed a tenderness and a sentiment of admiration altogether indescribable.

"Oh! my friend," cried he, "on this occasion, as at all times, how great, how generous did you show yourself to be! I shall never forget that some years ago, in one of our last meetings, after a long separation, you told me, without then explaining that it referred to yourself: 'Hear me, my boy; I will tell you an anecdote which contains a good moral in it. A poor man was basely injured by another who was both rich and powerful—the injury he suffered was one of those appalling wrongs which the law authorises you to punish with death. The poor man was armed; he said to the injurer, 'You are about to die!' 'My life belongs to you; strike,' said the rich man. 'Listen to me,' resumed the poor man; 'hitherto you have been an evil doer—become a good man; be pitiful; go and assist your brethren who are in distress; you have been without pity to them: swear to do this, and live. But beware! your outrage has poisoned my peace of mind for ever; my life has become a burden to me; if you perjure yourself after this solemn pledge, sooner or later, I will come and reclaim the life I now leave you to use well: then, the judge and the criminal shall be in one grave.' The rich man took the oath."

"Proceed," said the poacher, interrupting Martin with a sneer of deep and bitter irony; "lean, and well upon my silly and guilty credulity. Yes, I allow it; I have been a fool,—the most culpable of fools."

"You will not continue to think so, Claude, when you shall learn how your example was a guide to me."

"I do n't understand you."

"But recently, I was able, in my turn, not to give back nobly as you did, the life of him who had injured me, but to snatch from certain death a powerful, a most powerful man; and then to say to him: 'Dedicate to good the life I have saved; you have great power, go and help the distressed!'"

"And he, too, was perjured?"

"No, Claude, he is not perjured," answered Martin, feelingly; "hitherto he has kept his promise. So you see, then, I was right when I told you that you testified both admirable and fruitful generosity for a great injury."

"No! I tell you I was a dupe, and a guilty dupe" cried the poacher, with wild and fierce animation, "yes, a guilty dupe; for I allowed one to live, who, in spite of his oath, has caused torrents of tears to flow; a wretch who glories in his depravity, and will transmit his vices to his children. I ought not to have suffered him to live. In vain did I strive to touch his stony heart, and point out the evil he did, and the good he might have done—I wanted to explain to him how it was he had been deceived and turned from the good path; at first he answered my exhortations with mockery, then to my entreaties he returned threats. Besides, you heard him yourself the other evening."

"Yes, and never was a more cynical, savage hatred boasted of for those things which ought to command our respect and compassion," answered Martin, mournfully.

"It was, in truth, the most insulting, the most audacious defiance that could possibly be hurled against mankind. Yet he has had his warnings. I have told all this to you—for you likewise have a fearful account to settle with that man. I have told you—it has lasted long enough—my clemency is fled—the hour of retribution is come. And your answer was: 'Patience, Claude, I expect to be taken into the Count's service—patience.' Well, you are in his service—you hear his hateful principles. His son—his worthy son—has been your sister's destroyer, and you will speak to me again of patience."

Here, as Martin instead of replying looked at the poacher with mingled grief and anguish, Claude exclaimed:

"You make no reply? then you approve of what I say? You say, with me, *The hour is come!* This

man without heart, without bowels, is he not the plague of the wretched country of which he should be the benefactor? This man with his millions is the absolute master of the immense territory which his greedy father won by usury as formerly they used to conquer by the lance or the sword. And what do we behold throughout these wide domains? the spoil of scandalous larceny. What do we see—but creatures brutified by ignorance, decimated by toil, and hunger, and disease;—poor tenants crushed into the earth by rents so enormous that out of these fields which they moisten with their sweat from day-break to sunset, the entire harvest goes to the Count; whilst to them belongs the work—to them unceasing cares—to them misery—to them ruin: whilst he enjoys peace, idleness, pleasure, and riches! Nor is this all: a worthless son—the living image of a worthless father—shall inherit these estates acquired by fraud, and transmit his vices to a new generation. Other sons, in their turn, will perhaps resemble these;—and thus one quarter of a whole province of our fair France is devoted and given up to every evil because it has the misfortune to live under the rule and dynasty of Duriveau, a vicious and depraved dynasty founded by a fortunate trickster. And yet they tell us that feudality is abolished, and bondage no more," cried the poacher with a shout of irony; "what a pitiful, what an absurd deception!"

Then he went on to say with increasing wildness and boldness:

"I tell you, then, I do think that since the days of human brotherhood are still far off, we stand in need at present of an example, at once retaliating, terrible, and fruitful, which shall astound the wicked, and encourage the generous to proceed in the right path."

Martin listened in silence to those imprecations of a resentment carried to the utmost degree of exultation.

Several times had his forehead flushed, and his eye glittered, like one who felt horrified at the feelings of the poacher.

After a short pause, he said to Claude with sad and soothing kindness:

"Claude, you have been greatly tried, and through many, many years. Your sufferings have soured your temper during the long, wild life of seclusion to which you resigned yourself since——"

"Enough," cried the poacher in a hollow voice; "the wound is not yet healed—it still bleeds."

"Yes, it bleeds—I see it does; and it is fearfully venomous; so I will not allude to the subject. I will not remind you of the most dreadful wrongs that

any man was ever called upon to endure, especially with such a heart as yours is; but the most acute sufferings: the most lawful resentment will never convert a man like you into a man of violent deeds and murder."

The poacher looked at Martin with amazement.

"No; pitiless as the Count is,—how much soever he may trample on his oaths and pledges,—however nobly you yourself may have acted towards him,—however justifiable may be your resentment, you have not, Claude, you have not a right to dispose of that life you once restored him to. That right is God's, and his only."

"I will be the Divine instrument," said the poacher.

"No, it is not your right; and you will soon acknowledge it yourself," said Martin with a gentle tone of authority; "for your secluded life cannot have extinguished in you that all-brilliant and noble intellect—that justness of mind, of so high a reach, which none suspected in you, when you formerly fulfilled the humble but venerable duties of a village schoolmaster, which you forsook for a wandering and lonely life. Oh! my long-tried friend, if in the strange vicissitudes of my life I have, since I have known you, frequently trodden upon the brink of some gaping abyss without falling headlong down, it is to you I owe it; to you, and those ineradicable principles which your fatherly instructions had sown in my heart. For you pitied the poor orphan, deserted like so many more with the same recklessness as the beasts of the field. Well, Claude, it is because I owe you this living principle of heart and mind, that I refuse to link myself to your plans, and intend *to connect you with mine!*"

"Your plans?"

And here the poacher glanced at Martin a searching look.

"My aim is the same as yours, Claude: my means alone are different."

"I must make an example——"

"We will make an example," said Martin with solemnity; "aye, and a great example."

"Will it strike terror?"

"It shall, above all, be a salutary one—as you said."

"The race I mean to strike are never taught without appealing to their fears."

"Perhaps——"

"No, terror alone—holy terror."

"Claude, what is your aim? To encourage the good to practise what is right; and prevent the wicked from doing what is wrong?"

"And punish the evil-doers for the sins they have committed, in order that their punishment may terrify their class."

"But if the evil-doers shall become as good as they have been wicked, Claude? If they shall become as charitable as they used to be inhuman?"

"Good? charitable?" re-echoed Claude with profound astonishment; "you forget that we are speaking of *Count Duriveau, your father!*"

The poacher uttered the words, "*your father,*" with cruel irony.

"Yes! of Count Duriveau, your father; and the Viscount, *your brother!*"

"And the Viscount, my brother."

"Farewell: your livery has poisoned you—servitude has poisoned you—you have grown indolent, inert, and corrupt."

The poacher then began to move hastily away.

"You are rather too severe with me, Claude."

"Because you are a coward; because you desert the good cause; because you have lost all firmness and vigour of mind; because you will by and by catch the virtues of Count Duriveau, *your father,* and the ingenuous mildness of the Viscount, *your brother.*"

"I confess, Claude, that I never knew any man more selfish, more covetous, more unfeeling, or more haughty, than Count Duriveau," said Martin in accents of reproachful severity.

The poacher started with surprise.

"I don't know any man whose soul is more closely sealed against pity, tenderness, and charity; I don't know any man who more openly declares the cold, remorseless, genuine contempt he feels for his poor suffering fellow-creatures. You heard him as well as I did, the other night; I knew him before, but never should I have thought him capable of so audaciously avowing such execrable maxims."

"You were afraid of him, then; you trembled in your livery?"

"I was afraid; yes, I did tremble, Claude," Martin mildly answered. "I was afraid of compromising, and for ever ruining the sacred interests which oblige me to play the part I am now engaged in about the Count's person. But you see, Claude, I condemn that man as fully as you do. And I, like you, declare that the man is doubly criminal, for he might have converted his immense possessions into a land of promise, whilst he has made it a vale of tears."

"Then what do you mean to do? what are you waiting for? I cannot see your drift, Martin," cried the poacher with fierce impatience. "Is not the son, too, worthy of the father?"

"Taught in such a school, how can we wonder at it, Claude, if Scipio is what we see him? No," added Martin, in a tone of deep sorrow and commiseration, "no, I never saw more ferocious depravity, more incarnate and frightful corruption than we both witnessed in that unfortunate boy, who coolly and contemptuously toys and dallies with the most appalling vice — like a stripling weary of playthings beneath his age, and he, too, scarce twenty!"

"If you think so, are you ready to join me in bringing the evil-doers to their duty, by the terror of a great example?"

"By terror? no; that is where we differ, Claude."

"And can it be after thus describing these two men in terms so severe, and yet so true, that you say it? No more!—you have neither blood in your veins nor hatred in your heart."

"True, I have no hatred, Claude; for when I was a child you rooted out the passion from me by your own angelic resignation, your own ineffable serenity in the midst of the cruel penury, the bitter chagrin, and the heartless persecution with which an unworthy priest sought your destruction."

"The time for resignation is gone!" returned the poacher; "nor is it my single resentment nor my private injuries that I wish to avenge; but if this man inspires you neither with hatred nor loathing, what then do you feel?"

"Pity, Claude."

"Pity!" cried the poacher, with a burst of wild and mocking laughter; "pity!"

"Yes, Claude, I feel that deep, that painful commiseration, to which you accustomed me in childhood, at the sight of sickness, and at physical deformity."

"You ought to say *monstrosity,* but the comparison is misplaced: we are speaking of moral and physical things; and to pity what does not deserve your sympathy, is a proof of culpable forgiveness."

"But I tell you, Claude, that an unfortunate youth, brought up in a noxious atmosphere, and thereby spoiled and corrupted, deserves to be pitied—nay, to be sincerely commiserated; and it would be barbarous—inhuman, to treat as a crime the disease which draws him to his grave."

"You mean your brother, a most interesting youth, I admit; let him pass; then comes your father—a most touching character."

"Like his son, he was educated and reared in a vitiated medium; and yet, you know, he once had the noblest aspirations—fleeting, I grant you, but such, I confess, as his son is a stranger to."

"Enough!" said the poacher, sharply; "time urges. Say your last word."

"I will tell it you: Claude, admit of my comparison. Here is a being smitten with a dreadful, contagious disease which he imbibed with his milk. A man comes to him and says, 'Death to the wretch;' the sight of his sacrifice will produce on all who are afflicted with the same distemper, a revolution so fearful and salutary, that, to avoid a similar fate, their terror will cause a reaction, and they will be cured."

"Well! I allow, we deal thus with raving mad men, and we do so successfully; we take one of their number, and we chastise him in the presence of all the rest in a fearful manner; dismay then causes a flash of reason to jut from their stupid brain, and they return to their duty. But now we are speaking of a man in full possession of his reason, —a man who applies it to evil with execrable intelligence."

Whilst the poacher was yet speaking, the shades of two men moving, stooping as they came, approached towards the spot, and extended along the margin of the pond, beneath the vivid light of the moon.

But Martin and Bête-Puante were too deeply engaged in their discussion to notice the incident.

CHAPTER XI.

SURPRISE.

MARTIN continued, addressing the poacher, whose excitement kept still increasing:

"No, Claude; I don't believe in the omnipotence of strong and cruel measures: humanity forbids them."

"The gangrene is cured with a hot iron. Your father and your brother are rotten to the bone."

After a moment's pause, Martin resumed:

"Attend! Claude; allow me to tell you a circumstance, both strange and wonderful, which I witnessed myself, and which will illustrate my idea: at that time I had a master, who was a celebrated physician, a famous scholar, and a profound thinker. One day he was sent for to a rich patient; when he saw the man, he was expiring, exhausted by excessive indulgence in every pleasure; his blood was poor, its very essence was vitiated; it circulated slowly through his dried-up veins, not like a fluid of life, but like one of death rather. The greatest members of the faculty had forsaken the unhappy man, after predicting his early dissolution. The scholar, the profound thinker, then recollects those singular, mysterious narratives, which relate that young and generous blood had been mechanically filtered into the exhausted veins of old men weakened by debauchery."

"I told you we must have blood!" cried the poacher, with a look of ferocious triumph.

"No, Claude, no blood was required; but that deceitful and sanguinary tale put the scholar on the scent of a most admirable conception. Hangings of silk and gold, impregnated with noxious perfumes, overlaid the wall of that opulent dwelling, and kept it in semi-obscurity. These hangings were pulled down, the sun once more pours in his beneficent rays on every side, and soon after by the doctor's command, the walls are hidden again beneath heaps of green branches, the newly-gathered spoils of resinous and balsamic trees, which inhale in abundance those gases that alone can make the air pure and salubrious. Then two or three young, strong, and healthy nurses came alternately to offer their fecund bosom to his dying lips. Oh, wonderful sight! scarcely have his parched and withered lips been moistened with this regenerating milk, and inhaled the wholesome vivifying air exhaled from the fresh branches which hang over his bed, when the patient seems to revive—to be born again! his poor corrupt blood is renewed; he is saved; he lives—yes he lives; and his preservation cost neither tears nor blood. A pure and nourishing milk, a few green branches, the pure and enlivening rays of the sun—such were the instruments of that marvellous cure. Claude, the same will be the case with those two wretched men whom I feel so much pity for: disdain, pride, and cruelty swell their hearts; their minds and souls are vitiated. Well! Claude, these gangrenous hearts I will regenerate, and preserve by taking them out of their corrupt atmosphere, and conveying them into a new world of pure and salutary thoughts, where they shall feel and enjoy the reviving glow of generous thoughts; finally I will give these sickly souls a diet which shall be at once salubrious and strengthening like a nurse's milk. Then, Claude, tell me—tell me, my friend, will it not be a great and affecting example, to see these unhappy men return once more to the life of the spirit? to every noble sentiment which they used to rail at? This transformation of wicked to good men, will it not be a lesson more instructive than the dreadful but barren example that you meditate?"*

"Leave me alone—leave me alone; you would make me as weak and as cowardly as yourself," said the poacher, sharply. "But you forget then that Duriveau was bound to me by a solemn oath, and that to every attempt on my part to produce in him the regeneration you speak of, he answered with contempt?"

"That iron resolution rebelled against the thought of yielding to restraint."

"But his oath?"

"He trifled with it, most unworthily, Claude; I know it; yet all that does not make me despair."

"You have faith enough in you, to believe in miracles,—to move a mountain from its seat," said the poacher, with biting raillery.

"I put faith in myself, Claude, because I am in a peculiar position as to the Count—I am his son; and when he shall discover that——"

"He will only have another reason for persisting in his crimes. You say it was through pride that he would not yield to the restraint I put upon him; he will yield less to his son—a bastard, he will call you; I know the man. Enough—enough! Continue to dally with your fancies; as for me, I will make an example—I am resolved."

"Oh! my friend," cried Martin, "your cause is too legitimate, too holy, too noble, to be polluted by violence; and besides I believe I know that, whatever you may say, *the times are approaching*;—yes, the nation begins to feel certain undefined hopes. I have lately passed over the whole of Europe. *Every where a dumb, deep, continuous, and secret influence is at work.* At this very hour, universal emancipation is CONCEIVED by the classes hitherto robbed of their inheritance:—now already we are present as witnesses to the slow and painful phenomenon of its delivery. But this emancipation will be born in its own day and hour, my friend; and its coming glory shall be hailed by the vivid and fraternal acclamations of all those who now pine and suffer."

In spite of his savage resolution, the poacher could not conceal the emotion he felt at Martin's discourse—so mild, so impressive, so convincing, so full of faith in a near and better time.

"He may be right after all," breathed the poacher; "violence is a bad adviser: a man's life, however bad he may be, is still a stupendous thing. And

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* The cure mentioned in the above simile was really effected by the famous Doctor Sue, the father of the great novelist. But we cannot enter deeply into sympathy and admiration, on account of the character of the patient. We hope the old libertine availed himself of his second life to atone for the former.—*Translator's note.*

perhaps my hatred blinds me; perhaps, in spite of so many reasons which to me appear to justify my action, it is hatred only—personal hatred—that urges me on; and, besides, for a man to set himself up at once as judge and executioner, however great the crime may be—oh! it is a fearful responsibility."

But the poacher soon shook off these salutary and generous reflections, and suddenly exclaimed:

"No, no! I must not give way! and you, who preach to me of commiseration," cried he, addressing Martin with ruthless irony, "from the lofty pinnacle of your clemency and hope, do you see your mother—insane? Your sister dishonoured; and obliged to pass as one dead to prevent the shame and scandal of a trial in full court, on the charge of infanticide? From the summit of your elysium, whence you perceive the signs of a proximate emancipation, can you see beside the pale desolate faces of your mother and sister, the insolent and pitiless aspects of the Count and his son, trampling their victims under foot?"

"Yes, Claude, I behold the sad mild faces of my mother and sister; yes, Claude, during our long discourse, their dear, beloved countenances have been unceasingly before me."

"Even when you spoke of restoring Duriveau and his son to generous feelings?"

"Especially at that time, my friend; for I depend upon my mother and sister to help to render the Count and his son worthy hereafter—to shake hand with us, Claude."

"You can't mean what you say," cried the poacher stupified; "your mother is——"

"My poor mother is mad," said Martin in a mild and determined voice; "I will restore my mother's reason."

"And your sister's honour?"

"And my sister's honour."

Martin spoke in a tone, and with a strength of conviction so deep and overpowering, that for a moment his hopes were shared in by the poacher; but suddenly disdaining this weakness, he resumed: "You are only mocking me. Farewell——"

"Claude," cried Martin eagerly, but in a tone of reprobation, "I speak of my mother—of my sister:—of my mother deprived of her reason; of my sister, who is dishonoured—and yet you accuse me of jesting?"

"Forgive me," said the poacher, holding out his hand to Martin, "forgive me! No, no, brave and generous heart—no you do not jest; but you are mistaken. To reach the end you purpose—would be—but no—no; it is impossible. Once more I tell you you are deceiving yourself: your illusion is a strong and subtle one; I respect it: but for my part——"

"One word more, Claude:—whatever you think of my illusion, respect it for a month from this day——"

"What do you mean?"

"Promise me to make no attempt against the Count for a month."

"And afterwards? And suppose you have been deceived, poor and noble heart? Suppose the disease you hope to cure is incurable? Suppose that man persists in his crimes, what will you do? for if after all I admit your presumptions, you must also admit mine."

Martin's face, hitherto calm, mild, and dejected, became dark and lowering; and, after reflecting for a few moments, he resumed:

"That is fair, Claude; I am bound to admit your presumptions likewise. I have likewise thought sometimes,—I confess it, thought with affright,—that evil has terrific consequences."

"And during these gloomy hours of despair," said the poacher with fierce satisfaction, "what was your project? Yes, on thinking of all that Duriveau has done to your mother—of the detestable influence of that man, whom neither his sworn oath, nor your own powerful entreaties—you, her son—could shake—you must certainly have felt a wish——"

"Claude," said Martin, interrupting the poacher in a solemn voice; "swear to me to make no attempt against Duriveau for a month; and at the end of that time——"

"Forward, *gendarmes*!" suddenly exclaimed a loud sonorous voice.

And more rapid than speech, Beaucadet, who had lain for some seconds with four of his men in ambuscade behind the bake-house, where he had stolen up to, sprang upon Bête-Puante, whilst the other soldiers fell upon Martin, who, stunned by the abruptness of the attack, offered no resistance.

Not so did the poacher: a desperate struggle took place between him and his adversaries, who succeeded, after a violent effort, to throw him down and put on the handcuffs.

"Ah! I said so, you noxious vermin," said Beaucadet, triumphantly, "that sooner or later I would lay hold of you. I had sent off a few men on horseback by the side of the pond, but I had come on foot across the moorland; so when you let open the flood-gate, you thought yourself secure? eh, rob ber?"

The poacher returned no answer.

Then, turning to Martin:

"And you, young coxcomb, the intimate friend of that blackguard Bamboche, who allowed my *gendarmes* to salute him, I was perfectly right when I said to the Count: 'Let us be quiet, and dodge them.'—So we were quiet, and here you are caught."

"And what am I charged with?" inquired Martin coolly.

"What are you charged with, my jolly fellow? with having connived at the per-pe-tration of the shot fired at the Count three days ago——"

"Me?" said Martin, shrugging his shoulders; "why I was wounded slightly, it is true."

"That makes it worse; it was a trick very well played—I own it, my sly fellow; but I am too old a bird to be caught with chaff. You well knew that the abominable Bête-Puante was hidden in the thicket; that you wanted the Count to retire from the window which opened upon the said thicket, lest he should discover Bête-Puante. You were his accomplice, and to favour his elusion you gave a description of his person, which is no more like him than I am to a monster."

Then Beaucadet suddenly added:

"But see, here comes the Count and his son, whom I had sent to apprise. They have come to witness your villany with their own eyes, my fine fellow."

And truly, indeed, a light vehicle at that moment came up, from which the Count and Scipio got out.

In spite of their late serious dispute, the most friendly feeling, the most cordial understanding now reigned between the father and son;—in a word, the Count appeared to have forgotten his momentary anger, and to have resumed his part of young father in respect to Scipio.

Being apprised of the fact—in itself a very serious one, and thus represented: that the recent explosion was the result of an attempt to murder the Count, and that one of his servants, was an accomplice of the criminal, and used to have meetings with him by night,—the Count and his son, informed by Beaucadet of the projected arrest, resolved to be present themselves and see the truth.

On perceiving the Count, Beaucadet exclaimed:

"Victory! we have caught them, the robbers. Monsieur le Comte, your servant submitted, gentle as honey; I must do him that justice, he offered his hands to the cuffs: but Bête-Puante struggled like a mad bull."

The moon was still shining. The Count and Scipio approached the group of soldiers, who surrounded Martin and the poacher.

"So you unlucky rascal!" said the Count to Martin with contemptuous severity, "you had, no doubt, before you entered my service, some acquaintance with this wretched vagabond, who not satisfied with poaching my game, has, it seems, a design upon my life. To think that I should have taken you upon trust! After this, who is to believe in certificates and good characters?"

"How green you are!" said Scipio, shrugging his shoulders. "As well might you trust to a horse sold by a broker: horses and servants are only known when tried."

Martin, resigned and thoughtful, smiled gently, but without answering.

"And you," said the Count stepping towards the poacher, "and you, vile beggar! why did you wish——"

"My name is Claude Gerard," said the poacher in a deliberate voice, interrupting the Count.

"Claude Gerard!" cried the Count, recoiling, pale and struck with amazement.

Then walking hastily up to the poacher, the better to see his face, and to convince himself of the identity, which he could hardly believe, he continued after a short examination:

"It is he—it is really himself."

"Who do you mean by Claude Gerard?" inquired Scipio lighting a cigar, whilst Beaucadet and his men looked at one another, being likewise much surprised at the incident.

"Claude Gerard!" repeated the Count, with deep astonishment, and as if crushed by the thoughts and recollections which the poacher's name recalled to his mind.

"Duriveau, do you understand, now?" said the poacher to the Count, who, silent and subdued before, soon raised up his head again. Then, with haughty brow, and derisive and contemptuous lip, he crossed his arms over his breast and exclaimed:

"So! it is you, Mr. Moralist, with your private epistles,—it is you, who, concealed under a travelling name, have so long roamed like a vagabond through my woods, and yet had the assurance to pursue me with your epistolary moralities?—me who thought you so far away, too! You ask me if I understand? Egad! I understand even more. Your pathetic admonitions could not reach my heart: you wanted to see whether the ball in your carbine would do it instead. Ah! you old rogue!—so you preach your charity with a gun in your hand?"

"It is not true—I never fired at you; but I ought to have done it long ago," said the poacher. "Remember your oath, Duriveau."

"Ah! the good note of La Châtre!" cried the Count, with a burst of sardonic laughter.

The poacher then turned to Martin, and said to him in a low voice: "You hear him?—you hear him?"

"So,—but I should like to understand as well," said Scipio to his father. — "What does it all mean?"

"You shall now learn," answered the Count, casting a look of hatred and defiance at the poacher.

Then in a tone well suited to a *young father*, and with a carelessness altogether inimitable, he continued:—

"You see that man there; he was a village schoolmaster; he was in love with a very pretty girl, who loved him as much as she could love a thing of such a species—half boar and half pedant; that is to say, she loved him as a brother. I tricked him out of his pretty sweetheart——"

"Such things have been done," said Scipio carelessly, without removing his cigar.

"A few years later, having strolled out of my way while hunting, chance threw me in the way of the wife of the country pedagogue, who, to console himself, had married. She was, in fact, very pretty, and tolerably well chosen by the rogue. He was absent at the time: I thought it a good joke to trick him of his wife, as I had tricked him of his betrothed."

"Do you hear them, both father and son?" said the poacher to Martin, in a subdued quivering voice for he was choaking with anger.

"I do hear them," answered Martin with deep affliction.

"But the devil would have it," continued the Count, "that Claude Gerard, unexpectedly returned one fine morning, and surprised me with Madame Claude Gerard."

"The wife of a schoolmaster," said Scipio reproachfully; "you never acknowledged this *faux-pas* to me; and yet you had the assurance to taunt me on account of that poor Chalumeau!"

"Scipio, be generous;—so then, Claude Gerard surprised me in very criminal conversation. He was armed with a double-barrelled gun. I knew the rascal to be as savage as a wolf.—To be plain, I thought myself a dead man. Guess, then, what Claude did?"

"Listen to him—hear him," said the poacher to Martin.

"I do hear," answered Martin.

"What the devil could Claude do?" said Scipio reflectingly. "In ambush at the foot of his wife's bed, he must have asked you for your money or your life."

Here the poacher uttered a terrific yell, and started so violently that he well-nigh broke loose from his bonds.

"Claude, my friend," said Martin to him in a tone of gentle remonstrance, "be calm and show your contempt."

"You have guessed the truth, my lad," answered the Count to his son; "Claude did ask for my money—not on his own account—worthy man,—but for those he calls his brothers in society."

"I don't understand," said Scipio.

"'You are rich,' said Claude to me, 'swear to assist your suffering brethren, and I will let you live; if not, no.'"

"Why truly," said Scipio, with his icy titter, "this is a new song to the philanthropical tune."—Then turning to the poacher:

"So ho! tell me then, my dear fellow, if every *injured husband* were to think as you do, there would be no more poor people left in the world."

At this observation of his son, the Count laughed outright.

But now there came a new incident to interrupt this explosive hilarity.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE OLD FARMER AND HIS WIFE WERE EXPELLED FROM A HOME OF FORTY YEARS' CONTINUANCE.

THE farmer and his wife, roused by the noise—by the prancing of the horses of the *gendarmes*, had arisen, and soon became aware that Count Duriveau their *lord*, as they called him, was there.

Terrified at the prospect of their fate after their expected expulsion from the farm, the Chervins resolved to attempt a final measure; and the tears in their eyes, with supplicating hands, they both of them came timidly on towards the Count, just as Scipio had proffered his last insolent jeer.

"Monsieur le Comte," said the farmer's wife in a tremulous voice, "in the name of a kind God, take pity on us!"

"What now?" asked the Count with haughty impatience. "Who are you? what do you want?"

"We are the Chervins, the farmers of Genévrier, my good lord; they have distrained upon us—they are going to turn us out—from here—where we have been these forty years. We have always worked as hard as we could, and we have never wronged any one; if we are behind in the rent it is not our fault; and yet if you turn us out, my good lord, what must become of us, my poor man and I, at our time of life?"

"Alas! it's very true," said the farmer, who, more abashed than his wife, had not dared to speak first; "what will you have us become, my excellent master and lord?"

M. Duriveau had at first heard this humble appeal with freezing disdain; but, suddenly reflecting that this was a circumstance which furnished him with an occasion to exemplify his contempt for the oath he had sworn to Claude Gerard, he said to him:

"You hear, Mr. Moralist, you hear your *brothers in society*, as you call them. I am, indeed, heartily delighted with the adventure, and to be thus enabled to prove to you the respect I entertain for an oath wrested from me by violent means, and which any defenceless man would have taken as well as I to escape the clutches of a sort of wild beast. Pay attention to what you are going to see, Monsieur Claude Gerard; and since you assert you never fired at me, which you may easily prove, as soon as you are again at liberty we shall see whether you will dare to execute the threat which you have had the *extreme kindness* not to effect hitherto. I will not even allow you to want a pretext. You see the delicacy of my behaviour to you?"

Then, turning towards Beaucadet, the Count added:—

"Quartermaster, the distraint of the stock and moveables within this farm, which belongs to me, has been lawfully determined—the valuation taken; I request you—taking the responsibility upon myself — instantly to expel the farmer from this house; and in order that nothing may be carried off, to leave one of your men behind to look after the place till to-morrow morning: I will then send one of my people to take possession."

"Alas! my God! to turn us out at this time of night," cried the terrified woman; "weak and ill as my poor man is, why it will be his death, my dear good lord."

"Leave us a few days, for pity's sake, Monsieur le Comte!" said the farmer imploringly.

"Let their bed, which the law allows the debtor, be put directly outside the farm," said the Count heedlessly to Beaucadet.

If his execrable pride had not been exasperated by the poacher's presence, his vindictive reproach, his living remorse, which the Count took a delight in braving, he would not have exposed so much unfeeling severity, (although he had given similar orders, which at least he would not have come to see executed,) but the fear of appearing to yield to intimidation, joined to the inexorable consciousness which he had, after all, *of his lawful right*, to which he was accustomed to submit every thing, had driven the Count to this deplorable extremity.

As it was said so it was done.

After a heart-rending scene, which the reader may easily conceive, the poor farmer and his wife were cruelly turned out of the farm, in the middle of the night, and in spite of their entreaties.

The poacher and Martin stood by, silent and immoveable, and witnessed this expulsion.

When it was over, the Count said to the poacher, with a disdainful look of irony and defiance:

"Now, Claude Gerard, good bye; we shall meet again, if you dare; it will not be my fault if you are not soon at liberty, and I shall expect you fearlessly."

The Count, accompanied by his son, then left the ground arm-in-arm, and went back to their carriage.

Just as they were about to mount the steps, Beaucadet said to the Count:

"Monsieur le Comte, a capital idea.—This villain Martin may have other accomplices among your household; before any body knows he is caught, I advise you to make a quiet search in his room, and take away the key till to-morrow. By that means, nothing will be removed before our examination, which shall be most admirably performed by daybreak."

"Your advice is excellent, my worthy," said the Count; "I will not fail to do so presently, when I get back to the castle."

The carriage which conveyed the father and son then moved rapidly away.

"Come, trounce along, you good-for-nothing fellows," said Beaucadet, returning to the two prisoners.

"Well, Martin!" said the poacher in a slow voice: "where are now your hopes? your illusions? poor noble heart! poor silly man!"

Martin returned no answer, but drooped his head in utter dejection.

After a few moments, the prisoners and the *gendarmes* left the farm and marched away.

Master Chervin and his wife, bursting into tears, and shivering with cold, sat down on the straw mattress of their bed, thrown down on the margin of the pond, a few yards from the hut.

The poor and good Robin sat at their feet, weeping along with her poor master and mistress, and doing her best to comfort them in their bitter woe.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARTIN'S CHAMBER AND MARTIN'S MANUSCRIPT; AND HOW A NOBLE COUNT DID THAT WHICH A NOBLE COUNT OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN ASHAMED OF.

On reaching the castle, Count Duriveau went directly to his bed-chamber. Then, with a candle in his hand, he entered a large dressing-room, and hastily climbed up a narrow staircase leading to Martin's lodging,—a kind of dark attic, without air, scarce five feet high, and hardly fit for habitation. But the Count cared little for such objections: his object was, as they say, to have his *valet-de-chambre within call.*

This apartment was provided with a second door opening upon a private staircase; the Count immediately double-locked that door, put the key in his pocket; and then, setting down the candle on a table, he looked with some degree of curiosity about him. Being obliged to stoop the whole time, owing to the lowness of the ceiling, Duriveau said to himself:

"I cannot conceive how any one can live in this place!"

The Count then set about an inquisition which promised to be soon over, for the moveables consisted of a portmanteau in which Martin's clothes were put up, a small chest of drawers with some linen in it, a table, two chairs, and a bed.

The Count found nothing suspicious in the drawers,—nothing to throw light on the nature of Martin's connexion with Claude Gerard, surnamed Bête-Puante.

After vainly endeavouring to penetrate through this mystery, the Count was going to withdraw, when he saw in a dark nook an old trunk the back of which was turned. To descend to his dressing-room, take up a pair of tongs, and next to apply them as a lever to force open the lock of that trunk, was but the business of a few minutes for the Count.

On raising the lid the first thing which met the Count's eyes was a bundle about a foot square, and two or three inches thick, carefully tied up, and

covered with a thick cloth; a cord was fastened outside the bundle with this address upon it:

"To Baron Fringen."

Somewhat surprised, Duriveau did not scruple to open the bundle.

The cere-cloth overlaid a white wooden box, fastened by a small lock; and on the top of this box lay a large letter-cover containing a sealed letter, and a fold, which ran thus:

"Sir,

"The accompanying box will be delivered to you by a trusty person.

"Agreeably to an order which you must have received, you will have the kindness, sir, to transmit this box to the King as soon as possible, along with the letter included in this cover.

"I have the honour to be, sir, your humble servant,

"Martin."

The sealed letter mentioned by Martin bore this superscription: "To the King;" and within the letter-cover a small key was felt, in all likelihood that belonging to the box.

The Count was struck with amazement: he could not believe his senses; twice did he read over Martin's note with still increasing wonder. *What connexion could exist between his valet-de-chambre and the king?*

This man who until then had, with no scruple at all, burst open his servant's trunk and committed the grossest indiscretion, now hesitated to pursue the course of his violent inquisition; but the temptation was too strong: he submitted to its influence; and with a hand rather tremulous, he broke the seal of the letter to the King, found a small key in it, and read the following lines:

"Sire,

"These are the Memoirs which you wished to read.

"For a long time, as I had informed you, I had practised the rule of keeping a journal of my life.

"From the day when, in consequence of my wandering and anxious mode of life, I found myself to be either a witness of curious events, either as an actor or a mere spectator, it appeared to me both instructive and useful (and many proofs have I had of this use), to write this memento and preserve it.

"Saving some few reflections here and there interpolated, and which I have taken the liberty to address to you, Sire, these memoirs relate to the story of my life from early childhood up to the present moment, and they remain as they were written, before and since the day chance threw me into your Majesty's presence.

"The first implied duty in a task like this—at least such do I conceive it—is an absolute, undeviating sincerity, and this duty I have never swerved from.

"The severe judgment I have passed upon myself, in certain circumstances of my life, give me, I believe, some title to deal out the same measure of justice upon other men.

"It was only by degrees and according to the experience I drew from the occurrences of my life, that my mind became ripe, my understanding enlarged, that my judgment was formed, and my principles were permanently fixed. I have, therefore, endeavoured to preserve in these memoirs, that slow transition of my thoughts, opinions, and sentiments which, through a multitude of events, led me from good to evil.

"In my earliest youth, I reflected but little; it was at that time I recorded all that pertains to my infancy and boyhood. These pages, according to the different shades of the narrative, will therefore frequently bear the stamp of carelessness and gaiety peculiar to that age. Subsequently, I began to look for the causes of the different facts which I was day by day a witness to.

"If, in the course of a life so full of adventure, I may now and then unhappily have deviated from the straight line, to return to it at length for the rest of my career, it may possibly appear to you, that the medium into which I was cast—a poor deserted orphan—has almost of necessity been the creating cause of those deviations from rectitude.

"Believe me, Sire, it is not to satisfy your benevolent curiosity—all honourable as it is to me—that I have collected and arranged the pages of this narrative, written so long before; but have done it in the hope that they may serve still more to strengthen and confirm your generous disposition and kindness.

"Very humble, and very obscure, on that very account, my life carries with it some significant lesson: the true history of a man who has lived as I have lived, seen what I have seen, and experienced what I have experienced, cannot be without fruit for you, Sire; for in many circumstances, this history is that of most men originally poor and abandoned to their own discretion,—in other words it is the HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE in all the variety of conditions in which they are compelled to exist.

"Accept, Sire, once again, the cordial pledge of my devotion. The great and sacred duty which I have to accomplish here will probably henceforth prevent my leaving France; but believe, Sire, that I shall never forget your benevolence, and I thank God every day, for having made you the happy instrument of saving a life, which it depends on yourself to render both dear and precious to mankind.

"I have the honour to be,
"Sire,
"Your most humble servant,
"Martin."

We shall not attempt to express the crowd of thoughts and feelings which besieged Count Duriveau on reading this letter, nor the hasty, the ardent curiosity with which he opened the small box containing *Martin's Memoirs*.

They consisted of a heap of papers of all sizes, evidently written at divers periods; the first part of these Memoirs was already yellow with time.

Count Duriveau seized on the manuscripts, hastened back to his own chamber, locked himself in, and, by the light of his wax-taper, began the perusal of the narrative.

It was then striking one by the clock in the Castle of Tremblay.

END OF THE INTRODUCTION.

THE MEMOIRS OF MARTIN.

CHAPTER I.*

HOW THE LITTLE BOY MARTIN FOUND HIMSELF IN THE SERVICE OF LIMOUSIN, THE BRICKLAYER.

"I RETAIN but a partial and confused idea of those events which were prior to my eighth or ninth year. But still of those bygone years, already so far off and so darkly shaded in the past, I still remember a beautiful young woman, whose quick and active fingers almost incessantly plied the bobbins of a lace-frame, dotted with shining copper pins; this sounding clatter of the bobbins was my chief delight. I think I hear it still; but, at night, my joy was converted into admiration: stretched in my little bed, I saw the same young woman, with untiring industry (she may have been my mother) working by the light of a candle whose vivid flame became doubly brilliant as it passed through the limpid water of a crystal globe; the sight of that luminous ray used to dazzle and enchant me, till by slow degrees sleep put an end to my extasy.

"After that comes a long void in my recollections, occasioned, I believe, by a fit of illness.

"But from the time of my tenth or eleventh year, my recollections are revived, and ever since they have been clear, precise, continuous, and singularly faithful as to persons.

"When I was ten or eleven years old, I found myself put to serve, according to my strength, a working bricklayer, called or nicknamed *Limousin:* I never left him, but constantly attended him like his shadow, for ever at his heels obedient and ready; so that people would say when we passed them: '*There goes Limousin with his dog.*'

"According to the custom of the country, I used to carry on my shoulders, just where the neck begins, the *hod* in which I mixed the morter for my employer. This burden was so heavy for so young a lad, especially when I had to climb to the top of a house, that I had long contracted the habit of walking with a bend in the back, and my head stooping; my shape even began to be twisted; but some time after, it is true, it was restored, thanks to a singular contrivance.

"In all weathers I went bare-headed, and without shoes or stockings, and clad in a few rags, which Limousin had first worn himself; I particularly remember an old pair of pantaloons of yellow drugget, patched in twenty places with as many colours; they had fallen to me after serving Limousin through two campaigns, he himself having received them in rotation from the sixth owner. Thanks to the slimness of my shape and my little stature, these pantaloons, clipped at the knees, had been, so to speak, fastened round my neck by means of strong whipcord inserted at the waist, whilst my arms came through the pocket-holes. Smeared and steeped through with dry plaster, overlaid with that coat of mire which is the work of time, this strange accoutrement rather partook of the wall than of any kind of stuff; it never tore,—it chipped off; and Limousin used to repair these small demolitions with a handful of fine morter which he first diluted with water, and then smoothed the breach with a fine copper trowel with an ebony handle.

"My food always consisted of a lump of coarse black bread, to which was added twice a day, at nine and three o'clock, the head and tail of a dry herring, united by the long dorsal bone. Limousin reserved the body of the fish for his own food; I thought the tail infinitely nicer than the head.

At night, on returning home after work, my master twice a week made us some gravy soup, which we eat cold the rest of the week; we then lay down on a straw mattress, to which was added during the winter months another thin mattress stuffed with hay.

"Contrary to the usual custom of his countrymen, my master did not return to his part of the country towards the close of autumn. A short distance from some large borough town, whose name I forget, Limousin had been allowed to build himself, on a piece of barren stony ground, a miserable hovel in which we lived.

"During the building season, Limousin was almost always employed by the master bricklayers of the borough. If at a later period any urgent job in his line turned up, Limousin took it in hand; if not, he employed himself as a land cleaner, whilst I picked up horse dung in the roads, which when collected in a heap, my master would sell in the lump to a gardener of the place.

"We rose with the sun and went to bed at twilight, without even using candle or oil. During the sharp frosts we spent our long winter nights, and our days too sometimes, in default of work, in a kind of benumbed stupor, which must have resembled pretty closely the lethargy and suspended animation peculiar to certain animals in the winter season.

"It was neither vigil, nor slumber, but a kind of temporary vacuum in life and its necessities. I remember sometimes when the snow was on the ground remaining for two days together without eating or feeling hungry: nor was it a state of absolute pain. I felt as if my blood grew cold by degrees and my marrow was frozen; the first sensation was really irksome, but it was followed by partial numbness, free from any pain whilst I kept myself quiet and huddled up, but the least move was attended with a sense of acute pain.

"Four or five times a month,—that is to say every Sunday,—this diligent, sober, monotonous life was diversified in the strangest manner.

"Limousin was a tall, rawboned man, strongly built, and about fifty; he had the look, his companion used to say, of a man constantly busy with some thought; his temper was very mild and even; he was a diligent, skilful, and indefatigable workman; he never lightened his task with tune or song; he was ever silent: if he spoke it was seemingly against his will; and when once we got back to the hovel, he seldom said a single word to me before morning.

"Such was Limousin for six days in the week. But on Sundays he became an altered man.

"At the dawn of the Lord's day, a servant-girl from the borough tavern used to come, leading an ass with a basket on his back containing a piece of salt bacon, a few hard eggs, half a loaf of white

* The novel strictly begins here.—*Translator's note.*

bread, and a small cask holding about ten bottles of wine. As soon as the girl had left the place, the door was bolted. Limousin then drew the table close to the bed, put the little cask, the bacon, and the eggs within his reach; he then betook himself to drink until his senses were absolutely drowned.'

"I shall never forget that one day, after he had drunk two or three bottles, and whilst still some sense was left to him, Limousin explained to me this strange theory of drunkenness.

"'You see, Martin,' said he, 'Sunday is my own day; if I were not to get drunk on that day, I should be a drunkard all the week long; and, moreover, I should become idle, envious, and quarrelsome, and some day I might even turn out a thief, or something still worse.

"'I am well aware that would be too much trouble and misery for me, if that were to last continually and for ever, like these roads, of *long-tail ribbon* four or five leagues in length; which, when you travel along them, merely to look upon them with their straight, never-ending lanes, makes your legs ache.

"'Now I for my part, every Sunday, instead of the long-tail ribbon of my dull existence, made up of burning sand and sharp flint, behold waterfalls tumbling over rocks, mountains covered with flowers, enchanted palaces,' and so forth; and consequently at other times I consider the grand castles, at which I have to work as so many thatched pig-styes, and their adjacent parks as mere molehills.

"'On Monday, when I return from my fancied excursions, what do I care for six days of toil? Have I not my own Sunday to revel in?

"'I never drink at the tavern; for in that house drunkenness works itself out in passion, in disputes, in insults, and in blows; it is abused,—it loses its dignity. I do not drink to wrangle with my companions, or for the sake of wine—base stuff, (I would drink brandy, if it were wholesome); I drink, and with good right too, in order to fly away from here, never mind where to: and that I do four or five times a month. Is not that better than to fall out with life and curse it?'

"'Your true drunkard does the same, only he does not argue the case.

"'Peter-John drinks only to forget that all the week long he has heard his wife and children crying for hunger; and also to forget that he will hear the same thing next week.

"'Simon drinks to forget that he has heard, and will again hear, his old bed-ridden mother complaining and groaning from Monday until Saturday.

"'Others drink to forget the labour which crushes them.

"'I well know that those who have neither misery nor labour to forget, and who have money enough to pay for all sorts of pleasure, and polite recreation, and who for all that get drunk like Englishmen for the mere sake of good wine, exclaim, when they see us drunk:—

"'Oh! the blackguards, the swine—what beasts they must be, to swallow such nauseous stuff, in those close and stinking taverns."

"'But, my worthy people, after a week of privation, of toil and vexation, where the devil are we to look for *proper recreation*, delicate amusements, within the reach of our purses and the ignorance we are suffered to live in? Above all where else can we find the *oblivion* of our distress and despair?

"Limousin acted rigidly up to these arguments with faithful consistency; when at work, which he never once failed to return to every Monday, no workman could be more industrious, intelligent, sober, or honest.

"Once I ventured to inquire 'why he did not get drunk every night since it was so pleasant to him;' he replied with asperity:—

"'Then, I should either steal in order to have the means of getting drunk without working, and steal I will not; or I should gain enough to buy the means of getting drunk every day, and in that case my earnings would suffice to make me happy, and I should no longer need to get drunk to forget my distress.'

"Now I am able to understand the true sense and meaning of these my master's words, and am struck with their justness and force.

"As a deserted child, my lot has been to live long enough among the indigent and their tribulations of all kinds to know that drunkenness is almost always caused among the people by the necessity they labour under of lulling to sleep their distress and cruel privation; it is among those whose fortunes are most precarious, desperate, and ruinous, that we see the vice of drunkenness extend in the most awful manner; and then we observe that it declines and becomes less frequent in proportion as men's conditions assume a little comfort, or as their understandings are fortified by education.

"Undoubtedly, there are exceptions. For instance, several years after I had left Limousin, I became a confidential servant to a great nobleman of whom I shall have to speak hereafter; though still young, he had an immense fortune; his wife was both virtuous and charming—and yet have I been privately to look for that great nobleman among the most filthy taverns in the market neighbourhoods of Paris, where he used to drink all night with the most loathsome and abject company; long after day, I had to bring him home dead drunk, through a private door, into the ancient and splendid mansion which his family had held for two centuries, and which his father had bequeathed to him, as he would have to bequeath it to his son.

"The almost inevitable misuse of riches acquired without labour, the aversion to pleasures of a superior order, the satiety, and disgust of every enjoyment, were fated to reduce that opulent noble to the same level as Limousin, the poor bricklayer, subject to so many privations.

"Thus, the rich man sought to forget his wealth in riotous drunkenness among the rabble; and the poor man to forget his penury in solitary intoxication.

"Every Sunday, shut up the whole day with Limousin, in our lonely hovel, I witnessed, whilst fasting myself with stupid amazement mixed with alarm, the ramblings of thoughts which the wine my master had drunk created in his fancy.

"Sometimes also Limousin obliged me to perform secondary parts in the singular scenes which his hallucinations excited: his drunkeness, however, was always harmless; sometimes so whimsical as to border on the grotesque, sometimes so sad as to call forth tears; but never did it suggest any feeling of bitterness or hatred. Occasionally he would relate aloud, by fits and starts, the wonderful visions which delighted him; or else he conversed in an under voice with his fanciful creations.

"One of my master's dearest and most constant illusions was his fancying himself the owner of all the umbrellas in France; (when sober he would indulge the idea of possessing one of those enormous blue cotton umbrellas which none but bricklayers use; but to effect that object he would have had to retrench upon his Sunday wine, and that was a sacrifice he could not submit to); I am bound to say, that far from thinking of monopolising those utensils, my master dealt them about with a generous hand to all who were in want of them: excepting those only from his bounty who rode in their carriages; on that point he was inflexible: nor could he find terms strong enough to brand those selfish niggards, who, without any need, *gorged* themselves with the umbrellas of the people.

"In these private performances, I was put to play the crowd, upon whom my master bestowed his thousands of umbrellas in the shape of his staff of hollyoak.

"Then, Limousin's ambition taking a more lofty soar, he saw himself decked out as a drum-major with his plume over his brow, his cane in his hand, drawn in a carriage with six white horses, with scarlet caparisons. Probably the drum-major's dress was, in Limousin's estimation, the very *acmé* of magnificence in costume; raised upon a ricketty stool, his left hand on his haunch, his right on his cane, my master, slightly tottering, it is true, would distribute on all sides his kind and benevolent bows and nods, whilst it was my duty to cry out, at the top of my voice, in my character of the male crowd: '*Long live Limousin, the good fellow!*' By and by, I also represented the female crowd, and had to cry in a shriller tone: '*Long live Limousin, the handsome!*'

"This expression, which was flattering in two respects, was greeted by my master with smiles fraught with amenity and coquetry.

"As well as I can remember the incoherent language of Limousin during these flights, he thought himself chosen by common consent as the handsomest and best bricklayer in the world; and consequently he would afterwards go and regale his *electors* in a brotherly way and with sumptuous magnificence in Solomon's temple. Then followed a marvellous description of that edifice, which quite transported me; then, almost starving myself, for I durst not touch my master's cheer, I gaped and sighed as I heard the long detail of the monstrous repast which Limousin bestowed upon his brethren of the trowel, waited on at table by the twelve apostles, dressed like savages: (no doubt there was mixed up with this incubration some floating recollections of the rites of his fraternity): the repast seemed to me delectable but monstrous; it consisted entirely of sausages and cucumbers, with vinegar for sauce.

"These whimsical reveries were frequently followed by melancholy visions, which melted my poor master even to tears.

"I remember that one day he fancied he saw and heard the common mother of all little children devoted, like me, to a tedious toil from their tender years, and whom hunger, exhaustion, and disease, often sweep away to an untimely grave.

"This mother was waiting for the return of her many—many children, with joyful and anxious eagerness: joyful it was, because she hoped to see them soon; and anxious, because they lingered to return.

"To lull her anxiety, this good mother prepared, as well as she was able, a vast quantity of little beds; but still her little children did not come.

"Then the mother went up and down, listening, and looking out afar: but nothing could she see coming to her, and night was at hand.

"Then the night did come: 'Poor mother!' said Limousin, who appeared to witness her motherly anguish, and whose tears fell fast as he related it.

"At length the common mother heard in the distance a noise which sounded at once lightly and yet tumultuously, and which came on every moment nearer and nearer.

"'Here,' cried she, 'are my little children,' and she wept for joy.

"And as the moon was then shining brightly, the mother shaded her eyes with her hand, that she might not be dazzled with the light, whilst, happy and joyous, she looked out to see her troop of little children.

"But, singular to tell, the noise grew louder every instant, and every moment came nearer; yet still the good mother saw nothing come.

"'I don't wonder that you see nothing, poor mother,' said Limousin in a woful voice: 'for it is not the tramp of a crowd of children that you hear, but the flight of thousands of little birds, and the sound is over our heads. Look—look, there they are: the moon is hidden by them. These are your children; see, they are all pale, and have wings. There they are, dear little things;—there they are, by hundreds, by thousands,—and by tens of thousands. Don't you hear them? how they warble as they brush you with their little wings, saying in their gentle voices, '*Farewell, mother, we are no longer in pain—we are free.*' Oh! look, good mother, see how they fly up, and up, and up: now they are in the clouds,—and so high, so high, that they are no longer to be seen but as so many small white specks among the stars. Come, good mother, cheer up—they are no longer in pain. Ah! mercy on us! she does not answer; good mother! she staggers,—she falls,—she is dead! Yes, truly, she is dead! Stay; what is that pale shadow flying away, and rising as it goes, towards the same spot where the little children had flown to? Good, the moon is now sinking behind a dark big cloud; I will do like the moon: so good night to all.'

"After which Limousin would fall on the bed, exhausted and stunned by that twofold inebriety, in which fancy had as great a share as wine.

"Alternately amused, afflicted, and terrified by these singular recitals and soliloquies, I spent almost every Sunday in a state of feverish excitement; at night, I had dreams as whimsical, which seemed to continue the hallucinations of my poor master.

"On Monday morning, Limousin would wake me up as usual; his face, his action, his tone of voice, which the day before had all been so lively, had become cold and quiet; the exuberant eloquence of the previous day was followed by taciturn indifference.

"My master then resumed his daily task with his wonted zeal, ever the first and the last at work; but, during the week, he would not speak to me twenty times.

"Such was the one singular, and may I not say, the harmless, fault or weakness of my first master; whose kind, untutored nature might have been a study for princes in its boundless affection for the poor.

"But before I go on, I must stop here to introduce a personage who will play a very prominent part in my narrative."

CHAPTER II.

LA LEVRASSE.

"THE personage I speak of was a pedlar well known in the country, and nick-named La Levrasse: this man seemed to have been connected for a long time with Limousin. Contrary to the habits of our solitary life, he would often come in the evening and hold long conversations in a low tone with my master; certain, signs, certain words, certain looks exchanged between them, led me to believe that they spoke of me! but I never really knew the subject of their mysterious whisperings; I remember only that one day Limousin, after one of these conversations, asked me to show him what he called my *relic*. It was an old button, plated and figured, that I wore suspended from my neck by a bit of whipcord;—I never knew how, or when, I became possessed of this object, to which indeed I attached but little importance, and which I preserved from habit;—after having regarded it for some minutes with a pensive air, Limousin returned it to me, and never spoke to me about it afterwards, but once; and for what purpose he mentioned it then, I will tell you.

"La Levrasse used his profession of a pedlar as a cloak to cover all sorts of dangerous trades: ostensibly, he sold through the country ballads, almanacks, and religious images; but in fact he practised sorcery, decided the fate of cattle, told where lost articles might be found, cured maladies, which he carried away, he said, in a mysterious bag (solely by way of compensation); and sold, moreover, in secret, books of magic, such as the *Grand* and *Petit Albert;* and above all, obscene books and pictures.—These particulars, and others besides, I have ascertained since.—Travelling through various parts of France, and even going, it was said, as far as Paris, the wizard-pedlar never appeared in the towns in fine weather; during which he exercised the calling of a mountebank. He visited our village in winter only, and at long intervals; no one knew where he lived; he gave his audiences and his consultations at the houses of those clients who sent for him, and refused to receive any one whatever at his own home.

"This man, still young, had a face not easily forgotten: wholly destitute of beard, and even of eyebrows, he possessed nevertheless a head of hair as long as a woman's, and as black as ink, which he wore after the fashion of the Chinese; while his thick tail of hair was pinned with a copper-comb above his pale and cadaverous face, which he was almost continually twisting into grimaces; for he always attracted the crowd around him at first sight by his jokes, his grimaces, and the oddity of his dress. In spite, however, of these grotesque points, his aspect was rather sinister than humorous; his round and yellow eyes, piercing as a hawk's; and his lips so thin as to be almost imperceptible, announced his cunning and malignity.

"His beardless cheek, his singular dress,—consisting of a round jacket trimmed with fur, and a sort of petticoat of a reddish colour which he wore over his trousers,—had gained for him the feminine nickname of La Levrasse; for he ranged, they said, night and day, over hill and vale, like a *hare*,—which is called by the country people, 'Levrasse.'

"A large black donkey, named Lucifer, laden with the bales of books and images belonging to the mountebank-wizard-pedlar, had also a peculiar physiognomy. Two enormous copper carvings hung from his pierced ears, which, thanks to the weight of these pendant jewels, instead of standing erect, stretched themselves out horizontally; and a large ring of copper, engraven with symbolic signs, and adorned with seven small bells, passed through his nose, completed his cabalistic trappings and assimilated his appearance to the eccentric aspect of his master.

"Lucifer was equally celebrated throughout the district for his knowingness and for his wickedness; if he told the hour by striking the ground with his hoof, if he stopped before the youngest and prettiest girl in the crowd while La Levrasse distributed his

almanacks and ballads, often also, seized with a kind of frenzy, would he throw himself upon the spectators, and try to tear them with his teeth. I was as much frightened by the ass, as by his master; and after the latter had paid three or four mysterious evening visits to Limousin, my terror cost me many feverish and sleepless nights.

"After our last interview, the wizard-pedlar, having regarded me very attentively, drew me towards him, and to my very great pain, cracked the joints of my arms and legs; after which, seemingly well satisfied, he spoke a few words in a low voice to Limousin, who replied sharply with a troubled air:

"'He! never—never——'

"After that, my master saw no more of the pedlar, who left him in great irritation, muttering curses as he went.

"It was upon this occasion that my master told me to keep my *relic* carefully, without explaining himself further on the subject.

* * * *

"The nearly animal life I led could not but dull if it did not extinguish the quick sensibility with which I was endowed by nature.

"Often did I feel the influence of an involuntary tenderness; my swelling heart would beat more quickly, my eyes would fill with tears, and an irresistible yearning for affection, which rendered me still more assidnous in my duties, urged me on to demonstrations of attachment, which were always received with indifference or derision by those to whom they were addressed.

"Thus very frequently, on returning to our hovel, happy in having faithfully discharged my toilsome task, believing—I knownot why—that I should meet an expression of encouraging kindness in the frigid features of my master, I would seize his hand, bursting into tears, and cover it with kisses.

"Limousin being utterly at a loss, no doubt, to understand any sentiment of this kind, would stare at me in astonishment, shrugging his shoulders, withdraw his hand, remarking drily,—

"'Enough, Martin—down, down, boy——' just as if he had been speaking to a dog, whose caresses were become too importunate.

"In this desolation of the heart, how keenly did I suffer;—stifling my sighs and hiding my tears, for fear of the anger or the ridicule of my master, I would throw myself upon my truckle-bed, and weep myself to sleep.

"After having tried in vain to make my master love me,—finding all my infantine expressions of attachment invariably received with utter indifference when they were not rejected with impatience,—I fell into deep despondency.

"Being now more experienced, I can understand better, and can excuse, the coldness of Limousin; owing to his temperament, and his drunken habits, he did not live, so to speak, in this world; all his affectionate and sympathetic tendencies, such as he had, were exhausted on the illusions to which he abandoned himself. Usually so cold, so gloomy, and so taciturn, this man, when once under the dominion of his fancies, would shed the most melting tears, give utterance to the most touching sentiments, or deliver himself up to the most unrestricted merriment; and hence the offer of my attachment had not the slightest effect upon him.

"Repulsed by him, I sought for another friend. That year, we had worked during the autumn at a country-house, the owners of which were absent. The garden-maid, a robust and well-grown girl of twenty, had shown some interest in me;—now she would assist me, when she passed by the building, to lift a heavy-laden hod upon my shoulders; now she would give me fruit for my repast, or invite me to come in doors to warm myself, when I had been standing out perhaps for hours, in a cold and drizzling rain, to serve a master who was entirely reckless of the inclemency of the weather.

"A deep feeling of thankfulness for Catherine's kindness filled my heart; believing that I should best express that feeling by speaking to her of the affection with which gratitude inspired me, and above all, yielding to that imperious want of attachment, of expansion, to which the coldness of my master had given double force by repressing its development, I ventured timidly to say to her, my eyes moistened with tears, and my whole heart elated with tenderness and hope:—

"'Miss Catherine, will you permit me to love you?—you are so good to me!'

"The sturdy damsel looked at me with her large, round eyes, in which for a moment surprise was predicted; then, bursting into a loud fit of laughter, which shook the whole of her massive frame, she cried:—

"'Thee 's too small.'

"Looking at me again, and redoubling her shouts of laughter, she continued:

"'Did ever one see such a toad as that? How old mayst be?'

"Then, adding some expressions too coarse to be intelligible to me, she bestowed upon me, by way of pleasantry or for the sake of instruction, a smart blow with her wooden shoe.

"If I did not say to this girl, whose depraved mind suspected me of a gross precocity, 'Let me love you as a mother,—I, who have no mother,' it was because I wanted words to express this pure and vague aspiration for that maternal affection which I had never known, but of whose ineffable sweetness I had nevertheless an indefinite presentiment.

"However, in spite of my sincere gratitude, an instinctive feeling of disgust mingled itself with my cruel disappointment on finding my advances thus received by Catherine.

"This second mistake did not cure me of my insurmountable yearning for affection, but depressed me with a new and bitter discouragement; I took refuge in the vague remembrance of that beautiful young woman, whom I had seen working beside my cradle, making her spindles fly and rattle beneath her active fingers, by the light of a luminous globe, the brilliancy of which was the joy and admiration of my infancy. This sweet figure appeared to me then as the tutelary spirit of my early years; but these recollections, so remote and confused, could not satisfy the thirst for tenderness which tormented me.

"Shortly after Catherine's cruel repulse, I had the courage to try again to make myself a friend. I cast my eyes on a young journeyman carpenter named Beauceron, with whom we worked in the repair of the country-house I have mentioned; he was of a mild and affectionate disposition, and had sometimes spoken to me kindly; one day, at the dinner-hour, embarrassed and puzzled as to the manner in which I should address him, I was sitting on a stone in a pensive mood, when I saw him and Catherine coming towards me; my morsel of bread and herring had fallen at my feet.

"'You do not eat, my lad?' said Beauceron, clapping me heartily on the shoulder.

"'If he do n't eat,' replied Catherine, laughing, 'it 's because he 's vexed.'

"'How so?' asked Beauceron.

"'Why, the other day, the young scapegrace there,' said Catherine, between her shouts of laughter, 'wished, you see, wished—wished—to become my sweetheart,' (the terms which Catherine used were in fact far more emphatic.)

"'He?' cried Beauceron, joining in Catherine's mirth, 'at his age;—a forward puppy, indeed.'

"I blushed purple with shame and grief; I was anxious to reply, but my trembling voice stuck in my throat.

"'Ha! ha! ha!' shouted Beauceron, redoubling his laughter; 'he—the young whelp — who has hardly yet been wormed.'

"To shame and grief succeeded a feeling of anger, on finding myself thus rudely bantered.

"'Call me not a dog,' said I resolutely to Beauceron; 'I am no dog.'

"'You,' replied Beauceron, 'you, who have neither father nor mother, you are a son of ——'

"I could not comprehend the injurious meaning of the last word which Beauceron uttered; nevertheless, in the overflowing of my wrath, in the ebullition of my blood, I *felt* the grossness of the insult; although a child, I felt for the first time a touch of hatred and blind fury; I was going to fall upon the young carpenter without thinking of his strength, when the recollection of the words:—*'You have neither father nor mother,'* which had brought on the insult that stung me so cruelly, returned to my mind; then my anger was turned into an inexpressible breaking of the heart, all my strength forsook me, and I fell back upon the stone on which I had been sitting, and sobbed aloud, hiding my face in my hands.

"'Come, Martin, do n't cry; what for? Can't one jest a little tiny bit, then?' said he, moved by my tears, and a good fellow at bottom; but he, as well as Catherine, joked as poor creatures do who have been cut off from all mental improvement.

"'Come, my little lover,' said Catherine chucking me under the chin, 'come home with me; I will give you a ladle-full of nice pea-soup, to dry up your tears.'

"Though grateful to the girl for her kind feeling, I did not accept her offer; ten o'clock struck, and I returned to my task, renouncing once more the hope of finding a friend in the young carpenter.

"After which, dejected, sad, and spiritless, I began to think that my master, thanks to his liquor, escaped every Sunday from his gloomy realities by means of his fanciful dreams.

"Limousin in his weekly intoxication continued to wander about in my presence, and I frequently played a passive part in the merry and afflicting scenes suggested by his temporary delirium.

"Whilst listening to the strange soliloquies, the wonderful descriptions of the enchanting countries that my master visited in his fancy, a curious desire, mixed up with alarm, had frequently been kindled within me.

"It may seem strange that the wish to get drunk, like Limousin, should not have occurred to me since the first day I saw him immersed in his hallucinations, and after he had explained to me his own theory of drunkenness — that drunkenness which gave him every week oblivion of the past, the present, and the future. I had always been deterred from evil thoughts by the hope of deserving my master's affection; but after the painful and fruitless attempts in which my first budding feelings had been most savagely trampled on, I thought *I* had likewise a right to seek in this evil habit, the same oblivion of the present, the past, and the future.

"I could not be restrained by the fear of grieving Limousin, for I felt for him, as may be conceived, neither attachment nor aversion; for if he did not treat me harshly, he never spoke to me with kindness. When once at our work, he never spoke to me at all save, to cry out in his hoarse voice, the constant words: *bring it here!* and then I brought my hod full of mortar which I soon returned, to fill again. At night, when returned to the hut, we supped without exchanging a word; finally, I earned by my daily toil the daily bread he gave me.

"So there was no bond of tenderness, gratitude, or respect to deter me; however, in spite of so many reasons to succumb, I resisted the temptation for a while; partly through virtue, partly from the difficulty of stealing my master's wine, and chiefly through certain vague misgivings which, in spite of my eager curiosity, I felt at the mere thought of rushing, like himself, into that world of wonderful visions and ecstatic mystery.

"At length, my resolution was fixed; I overcame all my scruples.

"First I had to get at the wine, a hard matter; my master kept his eyes almost perpetually rivetted to the cask, and he was so used to swallow its contents, that he never went to sleep till he had drained the last drop. I pondered for a long time over my mode of *attack*. At last, almost certain of success, I waited for the time; it came very soon: I had chosen my plan on the Thursday; the following Sunday I was able to act.

"I shall never forget it—it was the last Sunday in November; it was very cold; a thick fall of snow lay upon the earth; I had spent a restless night; in the morning, as usual, the servant-girl from the tavern, brought in the wine and provisions; when she had withdrawn, my master bolted the door, and placed the cask, provided with a tap, on the bed. Then taking up a large old goblet of tin, Limousin, without saying a word, sat down on our pallet, and began to swallow draught after draught in perfect silence: he generally remained silent until the fumes of the wine began to act upon his brain.

"During these first stages, I sat squatting in the darkest corner of the hovel, my side-look fixed upon my master.

"Whether it was the intense frost, or any predisposition that stayed the excitement of the liquor, my master, contrary to his custom, continued a long time without yielding to its effects; at length, I could see gradually melt, that mask of ice which during the week petrified his features; his pale face grew flushed, his dull eyes glistened; he suddenly sat upright and, in his vibrating voice, began to chant aloud a drinking song; then, as the drunkenness progressed, he fell to speaking in a loud tone; that day his visions or fancies, were of a mirthful kind; from time to time he burst out into loud fits of laughter and clapped his hands most lustily and cried out, *'Bravo, bravo,'* as if he had been present at a play. Too deeply engaged with my own thoughts to listen attentively to his illusions, I heard them without any heed; squatted in the shade, and pretending to be asleep, my hands clasped over my knees, and my forehead resting on my hands, I kept moving on stealthily every quarter of an hour at most, along the wall by such narrow spaces, that in the course of two hours, I had not gained six inches of way towards the cask.

"The day was gradually sinking, the snow began to fall again in large flakes; our abode, only lighted by two sorry panes in the door, was almost steeped in darkness; thanks to this semi-obscurity, I moved with less tardy circumspection towards the cask.

"All at once my master called to me in the midst of a thundering peal of laughter.

"I sat still, quickening my breath to make him believe I was fast asleep.

"'He sleeps,' said Limousin, 'well. I 'll go to the wedding by myself.'

"Then he fell again to speaking and gesticulating with increasing tumult and hilarity.

"My first success emboldened me; in two hours more I was close to the cask, between the wall and the head of our pallet; choosing the moment when my master had turned his back, I got into the space between the wall and the cask; I was venturing my all upon a single die, for almost at the very moment Limousin called me again, in a voice more and more stammering and besotted.

"Still I did not answer, and kept quiet. My master fell down heavily upon our bed; then leaning his elbow on the cask, he laid his chin on his left hand, whilst he held the goblet in his right, ready to fill it again: for as yet the cask was not empty.

"I saw my master *sideways;* he was clad very scantily in a shirt and a tattered pair of trousers, full of holes in every part; the dubious light which came in through the two panes fell upon his radiant, joyous visage.

"Limousin was humming a merry tune; his countenance, which bespoke ineffable serenity and beatitude, showed itself glistening with light and felicity amidst the darkness of the hovel; whilst the wind was hissing outside, and drifting the snow over the desert plain.

"When the moment was come for me to steal the wine belonging to my master, I felt a last scruple; but, at the sight of his ideal joy, in the midst of our awful distress, I faltered no longer.

"With a large nail, the point of which I had sharpened, and the funnel of a pipe,—for these were my only implements—I managed to effect my purpose; after boring the bottom of the barrel, I fitted the funnel of the pipe to the hole, and began to pump out the wine by long draughts, with incredible anguish, and heart-throbbings.

"At first, the tart and biting savour of that thick, heavy wine was very distasteful to me; I overcame this repugnance; and then a strange and unknown heat flowed through my veins: the arteries of my temples beat as if they would burst; my sight grew dizzy; a dazzling glow of light, which I could hardly bear, was followed by so violent a vertigo, that I clung with both hands to the cask — the ground, as if hurried along by a most rapid rotary pulse, had shaken me off, and amidst my confusion I cried out:

"'Help! help! Master!'

"From that moment I almost entirely forget what passed.

"And yet, I think I saw Limousin sit up on the other side of the cask; and then, losing his balance, fall back upon our pallet with a loud peal of ringing laughter.

"When I recovered my senses, I felt myself benumbed with cold. I opened my eyes, and found myself in the middle of a wood, stretched upon the snow, and the day about to close in.

"My head ached violently, my reason was still confused: I looked about me with curiosity mixed with terror.

"How had I come into that wood, which I did not even know? What had taken place between me and Limousin? Was I far from the hut? Had he turned me out of it? or was this one of those visions like my master's? These incoherent thoughts joined each other in my brain, when a noise in the distance, which full well I knew, made me suddenly start. It was a jingling of bells, above which resounded from time to time the chimes of a clear, penetrating voice, as it chanted the following piece of an old song:—

"'*The fair Bourbonnaise,*
Her heart as hot as live-coals,' &c., &c.

"It was the voice of La Levrasse, the pedlar, attended by his ass Lucifer, whose bells tinkled as he went."

CHAPTER III.

THE MEETING.

"At La Levrasse's approach I wished to fly, but my strength had forsaken me; my legs were stiff, and sunk under my weight; so I fell back against the foot of the tree.

"Soon after, through the open wood, where the large trees grew widely apart, I saw the pedlar and his ass coming towards me. In spite of the severe cold weather, La Levrasse, according to his custom, went bareheaded, and with his hair cropped in the Chinese fashion; his jacket, made of coarse brown cloth, fell over his old tawny red petticoat; his ass, at all times as strangely accoutred as his master, was almost buried beneath an enormous black hanging cere-cloth, which was spread over the pedlar's wares, like a funeral pall. Thus harnessed and set off, his large shaggy head, with its long ears pierced with their copper ornaments, appeared to be still more frightful.

"At every step the pedlar took towards me, my terror increased; again I wanted to fly; but, petrified with fear, it was impossible for me to move. A last ray of hope was left: the twilight already began to set in; a few flakes of snow were slowly falling from the dark grey sky: perhaps I might remain unnoticed, thanks to the trunk of the huge tree behind which I hid myself as best I might.

"La Levrasse was now but a few steps off, singing in a louder and louder voice, to while away the time, the following words, which I shall never forget as long as I live:

'*The fair Bourbonnaise,*
Her heart like live-coals.'

"Then, by way of chorus, the pedlar uttered a peal of shrill laughter as he repeated: 'Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.'

"So saying, he practised wry faces, by way of rehearsal, no doubt: all sorts of hideous and grotesque smiles, with such contortions that every muscle of his visage was at work; sometimes he would look up so fiercely towards the sky, that his eye-ball was completely hidden by the eye-lid; at other times he would contract the eye-lids, until their lining was displayed red and bloodshot; and finally, he would open his mouth to so full a stretch that it appeared to extend to his ears.

"The fit, or rather convulsion of this man's merriment, his strange shouts of laughter, instead of lessening my fright, increased it to the utmost. Suddenly La Levrasse left off singing and grimacing: he had just perceived me; he stopped short before me, so did his ass.

"Overcome with sudden terror, I yet had strength enough to get upon my knees, to clasp my hands, and without knowing well what I said, I exclaimed: 'Spare me!'

"After which, I sunk a-squat, bent over myself, and quaking in every limb.

"On seeing me there, the pedlar looked at me with every appearance of surprise as he walked up to the spot where I was, whilst his black ass, stooping as he stopped, stretched out his head to mine, and smelt me with anxiety.

"'What are you doing here, so far from your master's house?' said La Levrasse.

"I durst not answer.

"'Is Limousin hereabout?'

"I was silent again.

"'Won't you answer?' cried the fellow, in an angry tone, stooping towards me, and shaking me by the arm.

"In the midst of my fright, I sought to shelter myself in a story.

"'My master has turned me away,' said I, in a tremulous voice.

"'What for?'

"Because—because—I was lazy.'

"The pedlar kept his eye fast upon me; no doubt he suspected the untruth, for he resumed, with a doubtful look:

"'So Limousin sent you packing for being lazy? that's strange; he never complained of you to me; true, however, I have not seen your master for six months,' added he, reflecting; then he proceeded to say:

"'So then you have since become a bad, lazy boy?'

"'Oh, no!' cried I.

"'Then why did your muster turn you off?'

"I did not know what to answer.

"After a long silence, during which the pedlar looked at me attentively, he resumed:

"'What are you going to do?'

"'I do n't know.'

"'Your parents?'

"'I have neither father nor mother.

"'Where did you live before you went to Limousin?'

"'I do n't know.'

"'Who put you first apprentice to him?'

"'I do n't know.'

"'Is there nobody in the world who cares for you?'

"'Nobody.'

"La Levrasse ceased to speak, came up still closer to me, as if to observe me better, for night was advancing; but, probably not yet satisfied with his examination, the pedlar said to me:

"'Get up.'

"As I was unable to obey him through fear, La Levrasse, with far more vigour than I supposed him to possess, seized me by the collar of my frock, raised me with an iron grasp, and set me right upon my legs; then, feeling me all over the body with his hard bony hands, he said to himself in a low voice, as he proceeded with his investigation:

"'A good chest—prime limbs—excellent timbers—he has not wasted: and good wholesome food will make all right with him: strength and pliancy will come in time. I wish he was two years younger; but still he will do.'

"After this examination, which multiplied my fears, he said to me:

"'You do n't mean to return to your master?'

"'No, I should be afraid.'

"'You are right; he would nail your ears to the door—or even do something worse.'

"I shuddered.

"'Where do you intend to sleep to-night?'

"'I do n't know.'

"'And every night after this?'

"'I do n't know.'

"'You will die of cold in the woods, or else the wolves will eat you up.'

"Here I began to cry most bitterly.

"'Come, do n't cry. Your name is Martin?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Well, Martin, this night I will give you a lodging; after that, we shall see: get upon my donkey.'

"In spite of the desperate posture of my affairs, far from accepting the pedlar's hospitable proposal, I screamed with alarm; and starting up, I fled in dismay; but La Levrasse overtook me in two bounds with wonderful agility, and exclaimed:

"'What! afraid of me?'

"'Yes.'

"'So you refuse me?'

"'I had rather die in these woods, or be eaten up by wolves, than go with you!' cried I, clasping my hands, and falling on my knees.

"'And why are you afraid of me, my little Martin?' said La Levrasse, in a soothing tone, which only added to my fright; 'fear nothing; I will be your protector.'

"'I would rather return to my master.'

"'It is too late; you won't see him again,' said the pedlar, to me.

"Thereupon he twined his brawny arms about me, overcame with the greatest ease my feeble efforts to resist, drew a leather strap out of his pocket, fastened my hands behind my back, and then lifting me up like a feather, he carried me to his donkey, put back the cloth which covered him, stretched me crossways over his bales of goods, and then spreading the cere-cloth over me, he said with a titter:

"'Good night, little Martin, good night.'

"Then addressing his donkey:

"'Go on Lucifer!' and accordingly Lucifer went on.

"There had been a heavy fall of snow during the day; the sound of the ass's steps, and those of La Levrasse were completely deadened: frightened almost to death, and letting my body go along with the movement of the ass, I heard nothing else, amidst the deep silence of the night, but the clear vibrating voice of La Levrasse, singing over and over again:

"'*The fair Bourbonnaise,*
Her heart as hot as live coal,
Ha, ha, ha, hi hi!'

"I cannot say how long we continued to march in this order through the woods; but twice I could perceive, by the splashing of the water, that the ass was crossing a ford, whilst La Levrasse probably passed them circuitously; for at such times his voice seemed to be moving away.

"After having proceeded in this manner for two or three hours, the donkey stopped all at once.

"I heard the noise of a bell violently rung, and, a few minutes after, a thick husky voice inquired peevishly:

"'Who is there, at this time of night?'

"'I—Mother Bigbone,' replied La Levrasse, for the formidable voice he answered to belonged to a woman.

"'Who are you?'

"'I, I, your man,' cried La Levrasse in a passion; 'do n't you know me again?'

"'Thunder of heaven! is it you? Who the devil could expect you, at such a time; you and Lucifer look like two heaps of snow. I am coming down, my son, I am coming down.'

"Soon after I heard the noise of a massive door being drawn open; the donkey went cautiously on, for we went down a steep shelve, after which he stopped.

"The voice of La Levrasse was heard again.

"'Bring us a light into the *hair*-room.'

"'What for? your bed-room is ready,' answered the husky voice.

"'Never mind, bring the light.'

"'Well, be it so; I am going there,' returned the husky voice.

"'Is there any thing to sleep upon? in that room, added the pedlar.

"'I should think so: there is a blanket and a fresh litter of maize-straw.'

"'Bring some bread too, some bacon and beer,' continued La Levrasse.

"'Into the *hair*-room?' reiterated the husky voice, with increasing wonder.

"'Yes,' said he.

"A few minutes afterwards, I felt them raising the cere-cloth that was laid over me; the sharp cold air struck upon my face.

"'Will you walk or shall I carry you, little Martin?' said La Levrasse in a voice still soothing.

"He then helped me off the bales of goods, and loosened the strap which fastened my hands.

"'I can walk,' said I, a prey to unspeakable alarm.

"'Then give me your hand and take care you do n't fall; it is very slippy on the iced snow.'

"After stumbling several times on going down a few slippy steps, I followed La Levrasse into a small vaulted room. A good fire made of poplar-wood was burning all across the hearth, and served to illuminate this nook with its warm enlivening flame.

"'There's your lodging, your bed, and your supper,' said the pedlar to me, pointing to a box full of straw and a stool on which stood a lump of bread, a slice of bacon and a pitcher of beer.

"'Now,' said he, pinching my ear with a kind

paternal look, 'good appetite and a good night's rest to you, little Martin.'

"After that he went out and locked the door.

"Being left to myself, and warmed by the heat of the clear brisk fire, I began to recover my wits; for up to that time it all appeared to be a dream.

"Soon after I looked round with a mixture of fear and curiosity; the poplar-sticks, mixed with vine-branches, crackled on the hearth, throwing out a thousand sparkles of blue and white flame, and exhaled their aromatic and salubrious odour in volumes. This sprightly flame was sufficient to light up the white bare walls of the chamber.

"Having chanced to look up to the ceiling, I then perceived for the first time that from the beams and rafters hung suspended, carefully displayed, smoothed, and labelled, a large quantity of heads of hair of every colour, fair, dark, chesnut and red: some of them were so thick and glossy, that they looked like long skeins of silk.

"This extraordinary sight filled me with new fears; I fancied these heads of hair had belonged to so many corpses—in my fancy, it even struck me that some of them were bloody—more and more terrified, I ran to the door; it was strictly locked; unable to fly, I resolved not to look up again towards that frightful ceiling.

"The sight of the other things about me divided my fears: the large box intended for my bed was filled with dry maize straw, on top of which lay half unfolded a thick woollen blanket; the bacon seemed very inviting; the bread was white; the beer, fresh from the barrel, covered with a thick crown of froth the brim of the brown-ware pitcher; never in my life had I before enjoyed such a lodging, such a bed, and such a meal; and yet I could not taste that supper; I dared not, even in spite of my weariness, stretch myself along the straw couch: I sat down quivering on the tiled floor near the fire-place to warm my benumbed limbs with its blaze.

"When I saw myself in the pedlar's power, I felt as if I had left my master a long time since; and as if I was a great way from his hut, which I had only left a few hours before. Sometimes I still thought myself under the influence of drink; then, the things I really had just seen and witnessed would appear to me as dreams of fancy, which would soon disappear; and I should awake once more under my kind master's roof.

"Singular to tell, when I gave way to this illusion—far from being disgusted with my first excursion into the mystic regions of drunkenness, I felt a kind of charm in my anxiety—and thought of the joy I should experience when, recovering my reason, I should again behold our sad and quiet abode.

"But when I began to think again that I actually was in the pedlar's power, and should never more see my good master, who was certainly cold, taciturn, and insensible, it is true, but who had never been either harsh or severe towards me, I felt very bitter pangs of sorrow, and cursed my fatal curiosity.

"The weariness of mind caused by these thoughts, added to my bodily fatigue and terror, threw me into a state of dejection, which was soon succeeded by a heavy restless sleep.

"I do n't know how long I had slept when I was suddenly roused by the screams and entreaties of a child.

"It was hardly day; a scanty ray of light, projected by the reflection of the snow, entered through a small window facing the hearth, on the side of which I had fallen asleep.

"The screams of the child which had awakened me ceased for a moment; then I heard and recalled the husky voice of the woman who had let in La Levrasse, and whom he had called by the name of Mother Bigbone.

"'You won't *make the hoop?*' said the woman angrily.

"'I can n't do it; I have not strength enough left,' answered a piteous voice.

"'Once—twice—you can't?'

"'But since I tell you that, when I keep my head so long to my feet, it stifles me,' answered the child.

"'I will stifle you, that I will,' replied the woman in a voice of thunder.

"And, through the same wainscot I heard several quick blows, which were succeeded by louder screams from the child, who, furious with pain and passion, cursed and swore in a frightful manner.

"'Now will you make the hoop?' repeated the husky voice of the old woman.

"'You beat me so hard that I will try again,' answered the child, whose teeth chattered.

"'Come, no speeches: begin,' resumed the woman in a thundering voice.

"There was then a short pause.

"Soon after the woman cried out exultingly:

"'See that, you lazy *Bamboche!* it was nothing but idleness that stifled you.'

"At the very same moment the child was seized with a violent fit of coughing, convulsive and acute, interrupted now and then with strangulated hiccoughs; he seemed almost suffocated.

"'So, ho! you make pretence to be stifled,' said the husky voice; 'wait a bit: I will make you sing so loud, that it will open your throat for you.'

"Then the quick blows resounded a second time.

"This time the child did not scream at all, but the woman it was who swore and blasphemed, and then cried out:

"'Rascal Bamboche! he has bitten my flesh through. The villain is more wicked and deceitful than a wild cat.

"'So you bite, you scoundrel. Come, I will give you change for your money in the cellar, for here you might wake the *little stranger*.'

"Then, after the noise of a little struggling, a few faint murmurs and cries which died away in the distance, all was still again.

"I was shivering and quaking all over; the little stranger was certainly myself.

"What did they set that boy to do, when they ordered him to *make the hoop?* What did those words mean? No doubt it was something very painful, since I had heard the poor child almost stifled. Was that to be my lot also?

"Then I remembered that the day before, La Levrasse had felt my limbs very attentively, and, in a singular manner, that he had tried my chest, and uttered words of unknown meaning. My terror increased all the more, that I was threatened with dangers which I did not understand, and which were full of mystery. Finally, this lonely house, those heads of hair of various colours hanging down from the ceiling, that boy they were no doubt torturing in a cellar that his cries might not reach my ear; all these circumstances united, so greatly increased my dismay, that, forgetting my vain attempts on the previous night, I ran to the door; finding it double-locked, I rushed to the window, through which the day-light began to peep; it was fenced with bars on the outside.

"Then it was I felt completely subdued by despair; I flung myself down on the bed of maize, crying out in a voice broken with sobs:

"'Who is there to pity me? None—none whatever; I have nobody to feel for me, for I have neither father nor mother.

"And then I wept and cried, and sobbed for some time in all the bitterness of desolation added to alarm.

"Suddenly my door was opened, and La Levrasse came in."

CHAPTER IV.

MOTHER BIGBONE.

"'Good morning, little Martin,' said La Levrasse, in his soothing voice, and walking up to my bed, thinking probably that I was asleep, for I had thrown myself flat upon my stomach, and hidden my face in my hands; La Levrasse added:

"'We sleep, it seems, like a little dormouse?'

"He shook me a little; I sat up with my face bathed in tears. I cried out imploringly:

"'Let me go from hence, and return home to my master!'

"'What! what! return home, little Martin?' said the pedlar in a shrill voice.

"'I won't stay here.'

"La Levrasse laughed outright in my face.

"'Ah! ah! ah! you want to return home to Limousin, and have your ears nailed to the door—is it so?'

"'I had rather die at my master's than die here.'

"Then leaping from the bed where I had been kneeling and supplicating, I rushed to the open door; but the foolish attempt to fly was a fruitless one; La Levrasse overtook me at the sill, and brought me back to the bed, saying:

"'Come little Martin, be a good boy. You are very silly to want to go home to your master—who is to tell you the way?—nobody; there are no houses in the woods we came through; so that to-night you would be again, as I found you yesterday, ready to die of cold, or to be eaten up by the wolves. And besides,' added La Levrasse threateningly, 'I won't let you go away. Make yourself easy; the doors are strong and the walls thick and high; when I leave this house you shall leave it with me, and,' continued he in his soothing voice, 'you won't be sorry for it, little Martin.'

"Seeing myself thus absolutely in the power of La Levrasse, I attempted neither to move his pity nor to alter his mind; sinking back on my bed, I uttered that complaint, which always constituted the deepest sense of my despair.

"'I have no father nor mother; nobody will pity me!'

"'What's that you say? that you have no father nor mother, my little Martin? Why then I will be your father, and I will give you a mother,' added he with a bitter smile, 'oh! such a mother as you never can have had, I am am sure.'

"Whereupon La Levrasse cried out in his clear shrill voice, as he stepped towards the door:

"'Here! Mother Bigbone.'

"'Let me finish *rocking Bamboche*,' answered a thundering voice, which seemed to issue from the bowels of the land, and which no doubt came up out of the cellar where the woman had carried the child.

"I understood the meaning of the words: I am *rocking Bamboche*.

"La Levrasse went on:

"'Eh—what a good mother! Do you hear how she rocks her *little darling children?* so she will *rock you*, little Martin.'

"'Oh! yes—yes, I believe you,' stammered I, quaking at the same time.

"'Come then, old woman; make haste,' repeated La Levrasse.

"'Wait a moment! thunder of heaven! here I am,' answered Mother Bigbone in a voice which shook the window-panes.

"A few moments after, Mother Bigbone entered the room.

"She was a woman about six and thirty, full six feet four inches high, enormously large in frame, and fleshy: her upper lip was shaded with genuine moustache, as black as her thick eye-brows; her broad red face, her virago-like shape and bearing, her hoarse masculine voice, her harsh and brazen countenance,—in fine her completely virile appearance, formed a whimsical contrast with La Levrasse.

"I have since observed how chance, that had given to this man the beardless face and the clear voice of a woman, and to that woman the moustache and strong voice of a man, was turned to account by both, by its application to the grotesque part of their shows. Among his various trades more or less venturesome, La Levrasse included that of *itinerant mountebank and buffoon*, which was the favourite avocation of all; and if he forsook it in winter for that of pedlar and wandering conjuror, it was, first, because your open-air performances are profitable, and indeed passable, only in the mild season; and, secondly, because his troop of actors was frequently broken and disparaged.

"Whilst alluding to the several trades of La Levrasse, I must mention that of *dealer in hair cut from the head*, which explained the abundance of capillary spoils that hung down from the ceiling in my room.

"Yes, so it was. La Levrasse was one of those speculators who, at the time of year which is most inclement, when wages are scant, and wretchedness intolerable, journey through the poorest provinces in France, to tempt with the unfeeling offer of fifteen or twenty sous the poor indigent girls, and who for this vile guerdon filch from those unfortunates their fine, long, silky hair—their only adornment.

"The pedlar's partner, the gigantic Mother Bigbone—so called on account of her stature—used to fill, during their public performances, the part of *giantess;* a true female Alcides who, rounding her body to the shape of a bow, and supported on her hands and feet, her head thrown backwards, used to invite three men of the largest build, to stand upon her stomach and to move up and down upon it—all which she stood like a heroine without any sign of pain; after which, taking to other exercises, she would fence with the best master in the garrison, or lift tremendous weights with her teeth.

"When she came into my room, Mother Bigbone was in her *working-dress;* for whilst she ordered Bamboche to make the hoop—that is, to bend his back to his heels—the woman was rehearsing an exercise with the child.

"The costume of the giantess consisted of a well-worn frock, patched in twenty places, formerly of salmon colour; this garb exposed her Herculean legs, and her rugged knees like the knot or boss of an oak-tree; a sort of short tunic, made out of a black and greasy petticoat, girded her loins, whilst an old red shawl went across her monstrous chest, and was tied behind her. Finally, to complete her virile aspect, her black, thick hair, which was as stiff as the mane of a horse, was cut short round her head.

"Such was Mother Bigbone, when she appeared to me for the first time, holding in her hand a whip or cat with several tails to it.

"'Come then, Mother Bigbone,' said La Levrasse to the giantess; 'here is little Martin who has no mother and wants to have one. Won't you be his mother?'

"'Rather,' answered Mother Bigbone in her big voice.

"And coming up to me, she took me up in her arms like a little babe and set me down near the window, to look at me more closely.

"'We must see him, however, this little newcomer,' said she. 'Come, my son, lift up your chin, and let us examine you. He's a nice boy: when once he is polished he will be as active as a squirrel. But his arms and his legs? Let us try if they are pliable. Good! good! they will do when the bones and sinews learn to comply.'

"Whilst saying this, Mother Bigbone had turned and twisted my arms and legs in every way, and made them creak in their joints; all which gave me the most dreadful pain, and made me scream out whilst I struggled to get loose.

"'Be still, and hold your tongue; one would think I was flaying you alive,' resumed the formidable woman.

"She then proceeded with her scrutiny, adding, as she felt my ribs:

"'And this little bump;—well, well, he's quite tender yet; that will soon grow straight again. But, thunder of heaven! be quiet, or I 'll dust you.'

"Then she shook the cat.

"In spite of her threat, and the energetic recommendation of Mother Bigbone, who at that moment, having set her huge knotted knee against my back, pulled me back so violently by the shoulders, that I thought my loins were smashed; I screamed out once more with agony.

"'Little Martin, little Martin! if you are not good I shall fall out with you,' said La Levrasse, frowning.

"'For God's sake pity me,' said I, weeping, to Mother Bigbone.

"'Pity — pity!—it's always the same cry; you teach them to work betimes; you give them a trade for nothing, and one would think you were tearing out their bowels,' cried Mother Bigbone in a passion; then, turning to me:

"'Come now, do you think we are going to board and lodge you, and dress you out of charity? You must gain your living—and so you shall gain it. Thunder of heaven! you are well built, young, and slender; you will ply and bend as well as any of them. In less than two months, I promise you that you shall do the *promenade turque* and the *saut du lapin* like a jewel; and, moreover, you shall walk upon your hands, with your head down and your feet up, as if you had been born so.'

"'Which will save you in shoe-leather, little Martin,' added La Levrasse, sententiously.

"I did not understand what they meant to do with me. Still, as it seemed they did not intend to kill me, since they spoke of certain exercises which I should have to practise in two months' time, I became more easy. Besides, Mother Bigbone, in spite of her rough voice, her moustache, her bulky frame, her vulgar manners, and her cat, inspired me perhaps with less dread than the mountebank; and happily it was she who was to superintend *my education*.

"'Come, my son,' said Mother Bigbone, 'kiss your mamma's hand; be a good boy, and you shall have your first lesson to-morrow: to-day I give you a holiday, that you may have time to become acquainted with Bamboche, a little rascal of your own age. In the course of a few days you shall have a

little girl of the same age: then you will be able to play your pranks, you villains.'

"After which Mother Bigbone made a sign for me to follow her, and stopped before a low-roofed staircase leading down into the cellar; she cried out:

"'Bamboche, come up. I forgive you for the sake of the little new-comer; you may play and enjoy yourselves all day in the yard: but to-morrow we will ply and bend, and no mistake. Well, are you coming up then, Bamboche?'

"The boy did not stir.

"'Well, stay there, if you like. And you shall play by yourself, little Martin; but don't trust Bamboche: he is as wicked and cunning as the devil. But stop—I had forgotten. To give you heart, I must show you the fine clothes you will have, if you get on with your work. Come with me.'

"Mother Bigbone then took me into a chamber, containing, amongst other things, a large trunk which she opened, and out of which she took an old Turkish jacket made of red velvet, dotted with tarnished spangles.

"'Try that on, little Martin. Good! now see how grand you look.'

"The jacket, too long for me by half, looked like a frock coat upon me; but in spite of my anxiety, I confess that this garment looked splendid and dazzling in my eyes; in spite of my alarm, the hope of one day wearing so magnificent a garb gave me a secret satisfaction.

"'Now when, besides this, you shall be decked out with a pair of flesh-coloured trousers, a fine spangled waistcoat, and green buskins lined with cat-skin, you will look for all the world like a cherub,' added Mother Bigbone. 'Now you may, if you, like go and visit Bamboche in the cellar, or play in the yard. I will call you in time to munch your dinner.'

"Mother Bigbone went in to La Levrasse; I remained alone in rather a large yard, surrounded with high crumbling walls, strongly closed by a massive door. Into this yard looked the windows of the mean-looking house; beneath a shed was a long spacious carriage, which served to convey the mountebank and his troop, when their number was complete.

"The height of the walls prevented my seeing whether this dwelling-house did or did not belong to some little borough or hamlet.

"Left alone to my reflections, I thought of nothing else but the boy of whom Mother Bigbone had spoken to me, and whose screams I had heard. However painful my new condition might be, it could hardly be ruder, or more wretched than the past: and then I was going to share it with a child of my own age! The thought of meeting at last with a companion and a friend, seemed to me sufficient to render my lot endurable.

"I had been so miserable all my life till then, and so luckless in my yearnings for affection, that this meeting with Bamboche, under such circumstances, enhanced its value in my esteem; my heart, ever before so painfully oppressed, dilated,; and my anguish gave place to the first beams of hope. I forgot at this time the fright into which I had been thrown by the anticipation of those mysterious exercises to which I was devoted, and which had drawn such heart-rending cries from Bamboche; I thought only of going to meet that poor miserable child: he was in pain: he had been punished. I thought I should be doing an act of good-fellowship, and winning his regard by going to him.

"Mother Bigbone had pointed out to me the door of the cellar in which he was locked up; I ran to it directly.

'The arched staircase led into the yard; I went down a few steps still covered with snow, and reached a kind of landing-place, where I found the door of the cellar. My eyes being used to the dark, and a single ray of vivid light penetrating therein through a narrow vent-hole, I was able to see Bamboche squatted in a corner of the cellar, his elbows on his knees, and his chin embedded within the hollow of his two hands.

"The first thing that struck me was the wild glare of the large, grey eyes of that boy; they seemed to me the more expansive on account of his pale and meagre cheeks; he appeared to be about twelve or thirteen; his figure was much taller than mine; his deep sunken cheeks displayed his very prominent cheek-bones; his mouth, with its hanging corners, and spare lips, gave him a keen, spiteful look; his coarse black hair, closely cropped, grew very low down, and in such fashion, that after having covered the top of the face, they grew up in a peak towards the temples, which they left bare. His black head of hair was so whimsically contrasted by the paleness of his brow, that when in the shade, he appeared to be gifted with a pair of white horns.

"Bamboche had on a poor tattered peasant's frock; his feet were naked, and lay so on the damp sod. On seeing me he said nothing, but glanced at me with a strange wild look.

"'You must be cold and dull in this cellar,' said I, approaching him; 'will you come up into the yard?'

"'Hold your peace; I don't know you,' answered Bamboche, rudely.

"'I do n't know you either, but I am to stay here, like you, with La Levrasse. Last night when they beat you, I heard you cry out, and it made me feel so sorry.'

"Bamboche burst out a-laughing, and replied:

"'What a cursed coward you must be, to feel hurt when others are beaten.'

"Such was the language of that young boy—such it continued throughout our conversation,—every sentence being marked with oaths and blasphemy, which I shall suppress.

"Feeling as much grieved as I was astonished at Bamboche's answer, I replied gently:

"'I was very much hurt to think they were beating you; and if I were beaten would it give you no pain?'

"'No: it would give me pleasure; for then I should not be the only one beaten.'

"'Why are you so set against me? I never injured you.'

"'I do n't care.'

"'You are unkind—you are.'

"'Be off!'

"'I beg of you to listen to me.'

"'There! you will have it; take that.'

"And Bamboche, whom I nowise suspected, sprang up with the nimbleness of a cat. Far stronger than I, he threw me down upon the ground; then seizing me with one hand by the throat, probably to prevent my crying out, with the other hand he fell to striking me in the face, the breast, and wherever he could.

"At first I was stunned by this sudden attack; I did not attempt to defend myself; but soon, irritated by pain, and the anger so spiteful an action called up, I shook off Bamboche—I struggled with him—I returned him lustily blow for blow—I even got him down and under me; there, in spite of all he could do, I held him, with my knee upon his breast; but I would not misuse the victory I had gained. For more grieved than irritated at his savage way of greeting my proffers of friendship, I said to him:

"'Why should we fight? Had we not much better be friends?'

"Then relinquishing the advantage of my position, I loosened my hold of Bamboche; he took advantage of it, fell upon me again with increasing fury, and bit me so savagely in the cheek that the blood began to trickle from the wound.

"The sight of my blood changed his anger into

frenzy; his eyes flashed fire; he struck me no more, but stretched his body over mine and tore away my frock to bite me in the chest.

"I thought he was going to kill me; I no longer resisted him: it was not fear—it was not cowardice that paralysed my strength: it was a deep despondency, occasioned by the gratuitous wickedness of that child of the same age as myself, and for whom I had experienced a sudden affection and sympathy.

"I did not struggle to defend myself; my moral anguish was so intense, that I hardly felt the sharp bites of Bamboche: I did not complain: I only wept in silence.

"Violent, vindictive characters always become exasperated during a struggle: the excitement maddens them; when it ceases, they are often appeased for want of resistance. So it was with my adversary: he arose, his lips smeared over with my blood, and thought me in a swoon.

The vent-hole in the cellar injected sufficient light for Bamboche to distinguish my features, when he had once more fallen upon me; I looked in his face composedly and without anger. He has told me since, that what had most astonished him was the expression of mild and sorrowful resignation stamped upon my countenance: there was neither hatred in it, nor passion, nor fear; but deep and bitter grief.

"'Your eyes are open—you don't defend yourself! and you are crying,' exclaimed he; 'take that—chicken-hearted.'

"And again he struck me.

"'Kill me, if you like; I can't hate you.'

"'You can't hate me?'

"'No; and yet, if you had liked, we might have been two brothers.'

"'Why, are you mad, little fool!' cried Bamboche, baffled by my resignation, which afflicted him in spite of himself; 'the more one hurts you, the softer you speak.'

"'I speak softly to you, because I pity you.'

"'Pity me—you whom I have pummelled with blows, and bitten: it 's you who are to be pitied.'

"'You are to be pitied also for refusing my friendship.'

"'There—go along,' said Bamboche abruptly to me, being every minute more astonished at my resignation; 'go—you are like my little bitch Mica.'

"'What of her?'

"'I had found her; I used to take from my rations to feed her, in order that I might have something to beat when I had been beaten; it was in vain I injured her—she never turned upon me. When I put her to the most pain she durst not even utter a single cry; her teeth chattered with pain—and then, after all, she would come and lick my hands and lay at my feet.'

"'And in the end,' said I, touched by these words, 'in the end you loved the poor beast?'

"'In the end, seeing I could do nothing with her, I tied a stone round her neck and threw her into the water.'

"'That was better than tormenting her.'

"'And I am perhaps more to be pitied than she?' said Bamboche to me with an artful grin.

"'You are more to be pitied than she, for you only killed her—that 's all; and now you are alone instead of always having at your side a poor faithful beast, who was devoted to you, and would have followed you about every where, and perhaps defended you.'

"'And whom I would have beaten to a paste.'

"'You might have beaten her, if you liked; but for all that she would have come afterwards to lick your hands and lay at your feet.,

"'The silly fool—she would have done like you!'

"'See, how you have bitten me—see how I bleed! Did I cry out—did I complain? A coward is one who cries and blubbers.'

"Bamboche was struck by this answer as it tallied with his own bold spirit, but he strove to hide his emotion.

"'Why didn't you defend yourself the second time as you did at first?' said he to me? 'Though smaller than me you are quite as strong. I have good reasons to know——'

"'Because the first time I was angry—the second time I was sorry to see you would not be friends.'

"Bamboche's features began to relax: his blind and wilful spitefulness gave place, if not yet to reciprocal feeling, at least to curiosity of the liveliest character: he said to me hastily, as if he were striving to set himself free from the better sentiments which now awoke in him:

"'Since you did not know me, why wish to be my friend?'

"'I told you; because I had heard you cry in the night—because you were of my own age, because you were unhappy like me—and perhaps, like me, without father or mother.'

"At these last words, the face of my wild little associate grew dark, and then saddened; he dropped his head upon his breast, and gave a deep sigh.

CHAPTER V.

THE FATHER OF BAMBOCHE, THE WANDERING FORESTER, AND JOB WOODMAN.

"Bamboche continued silent; I repeated my question:

"'Like me,' said I, 'you have, perhaps, neither father nor mother?'

"'I never knew my mother,' answered he abruptly, but in a tone much less ironical and harsh.

"'And your father?'

"'My father was a job woodman.'

"'A job woodman?'

"'Yes; he used to travel, and he would stop when he came to a place where they were cutting down wood; we then used to raise a hut in the forest with sticks and mud, and there would we stop till the felling and cutting was over.'

"'Then you have already worked with your father?'

"'I helped him as well as I could; I arranged the wood as fast as he felled it.'

"'And where is your father now?'

"'In the forest,' answered Bamboche with a gloomy smile.

"'In the forest?'

"'Yes; one day he nearly cut off his leg by a heavy blow with his axe. He fell down—the blood gushed out of his leg as if through a spout, and full ten paces from him.'

"'Oh! my God!'

"'I was frightened; I wept, I screamed,' said Bamboche in broken accents, 'I called out with all my might for help.'

"'Alas! I believe you.'

"'My father, for his part, held his leg tightly pressed between both hands to stop the blood, but it ran down over his fingers all the same, and he said to me: 'Child, pull me some moss, fetch it me—quick—quick!' I pulled up as much as I could, and brought it to my father, who bound it very tightly over his wound, but almost in a moment the moss would become red.'

"'The blood did not stop?'

"'No; then my father said to me: 'Child, bring me some clay—damp clay; it will perhaps stop the blood better than moss.''

"'What then?'

"'The earth turned red also as fast as the moss, and then my father's voice began to sink.'

"'Was there no help to be had?'

"'Help!' and Bamboche shrugged his shoulders with scorn. My father said to me, 'Child, run to

the large cross-way which they have cut away clear; there is a labourer using his plough, I saw him this morning; ask him for help. I ran to him: 'My father has nearly cut his leg off, and implores your help,' said I to the labourer; 'is the village far off?' 'Alas! my dear child, do you think there are surgeons in villages? We are too poor; it 's very well for the large boroughs, but the nearest is twelve miles off.' 'But you,—won't you come to assist my father?' 'I know nothing about wounds—I am not a shepherd,' replied the labourer, 'and besides, I can't leave my horses; they would eat one another, break all, and I should be turned off by the master.' In short, I begged and prayed so hard, that at last he consented, and forth we went together. But the labourer had not gone many yards with me, when lo! his horses began to bite each other, and to fight. 'You see how it is,' said he 'I can't go with you.' So he ran back to his horses; and I ran back to my father.'

"'How shocking!'

"'When I got there, he was still in the same place, bent in two, holding his legs with his two hands in the midst of a pool of blood. On seeing me, my father sat up; his forehead swam with sweat, his face was livid, and his lips of a pale blue dye. 'There is no help to be had without going to the town, and that 's twelve miles off,' said I to him. 'The labourer set out; but his horses began to fight, and he was forced to return to them. Father, father! what 's to be done—what 's to be done?' 'Nothing, child, but what you see I am doing; let all my blood run out,' he replied, in a voice so low—so very low that scarcely did I hear it.—'The surgeons—help—they are only for the townspeople. As for us—stay—hold—child; these are they who come to our help when we die.' And my father pointed at a flight of crows which were passing above the forest; then he made an effort to sit up, and in doing so took his hand off his leg; they were all over red and bloody; he then opened his arms to me, saying: 'Embrace me, poor child. You work already very well for your strength. What will become of you? my God! my God! what will become of you?'—Still my father wanted to speak to me; but the death cough seized upon him: he fell down upon his back and died.'

"On uttering these last words Bamboche, no longer wild and savage, put his hands over his eyes and wept.

"I wept along with him; I felt the deepest compassion for his sufferings. He had seen his father die without help.

"'After that, what became of you?' inquired I, after a moment's pause.

"'I knelt by the body and wept; and then the night came: I was fatigued and fell asleep. At daybreak I felt very cold; my father's body was already stiff, and his white smock-frock stained with blood. I returned to the cross-way in the forest, to look for the labourer of the day before, to tell him that my father was dead, and that it was necessary now to bury him. The man was no longer there; there was nothing but his plough. As he did not come, I returned to our hut, a good way off. I took up a lump of bread, for I was hungry, and returned to my father's body. The crows had already lighted upon him, and were slashing and mangling his face.'

"'Oh, my God!' I exclaimed shuddering.

"'I took up a stick and beat them off; but they did not go far; they stopped about the spot, hovered over the body and croaked, and perched on the branches close by. When I saw that, I took my father's axe, which I could only just lift. I endeavoured to dig a hole to bury the body in; I was not able: the ground was nothing but rock and root. Then I went farther off—it was not so hard, but I had no strength; I could not get on; and whilst I was engaged, the crows, seeing me at a distance, began to light again upon my father's body, and to mangle his face. Night was approaching; I dragged two heaps of wood along each side of the body, and laid others across them; and above them all, and to keep them fast together, I laid the heaviest branches I could lift; and last of all I set some stones above the rest; then I took away my father's cap and his wallet, and also his knife; his axe was too heavy, his clogs were too big,—so I left them. Afterwards I returned to our hut to take what bread there was left, and I walked on — and on, until I fell in with a job.'

"'And when you met any body, did n't you tell him that your father was dead, and that he must go and bury him, to prevent your father from being eaten by the crows?'

"Bamboche broke into a shout of wild laughter, and exclaimed:

"'What did they care if my father, who had died without help like a beast of the forest, was eaten up by the crows? People do but laugh at one another; and as the *Rump-in-the-bowl* used to say to me—he was a beggar whom I used to beg with—there are none but the wolves that are not eaten; you must be a wolfling, my lad, until you are big enough to be a wolf.'

"'And your father loved you well, did he not?' inquired I, of Bamboche, hoping to lead him on to more gentle thoughts.

"'Yes,' answered he, turning sad again instead of showing his customary sardonic grin, 'yes—he never would have beaten me; he only let me work in the woods according to my strength, which was not great, for I was hardly eight then. When it rained, he would cover me over with his leather apron, or shelter me with *baurreës*.* If on Saturday we were short of bread, he was sure not to be hungry—not he. On Sunday, in fine weather, he would find birds'-nests for me in the forest, or else we would hunt the squirrel; if it rained we stopped in the hut, and he made me little carts with his knife to amuse me; sometimes he would sing me a ditty. Oh! when I think of those days, do you see, it makes me sad.'

"'Because you regret the time when somebody loved you,' cried I, with tender affection, 'You see it does one good to be loved; since you have no father—no brother, I will be your brother.'

"Bamboche continued silent. I ventured to take his hand; he did not at first withdraw it, but afterwards moving abruptly, he said:

"'Bother! it 's all nonsense; wolves have no friends. I shall be a wolf, as the Rump-in-the-bowl advised me.'

"Not daring to insist farther that time, for fear of once more provoking Bamboche, I resumed:

"'And when you found yourself on the highway after your father's death, what became of you?'

"'When I had eaten all the bread that was left in the wallet, I entered a fine-looking house on the road to ask for some more, saying that my father had died in the woods; a stout gentleman, who had a silk handkerchief round his head, and was breakfasting in an arbour near which many roses grew, replied to me in a harsh tone:—'I never give alms to a tramper; go and work, you lazy boy.'—'My father is dead, I have no work.'—'Is it my business to find you some? be off—your rags stink in my nose, and make me sick.'—'My good sir.'—'Here, here!'—said the stout man, calling to a large dog, which ran up from the other end of the garden,—'seize him, seize him, bite, bite.'—Hereupon I fled directly, and then afterwards I returned stealing along behind the hedge till I was close to the fine-looking house; I picked up some stones and threw them through two large panes of glass: it was his head, though, I would have broken—the ruffian, who instead of giving me a bit of bread, set his dogs upon

* Bundles of wood.

me,' said Bamboche, still feeling a vindictive hatred, 'oh! I shall never forget that. It's good—it's good,' added he, with a glow of concentrated passion.

"'What would it have cost him to have given you a small piece of bread, that gentleman? he must have been a very bad man.'

"'The rich are all villains: they never give more than you take from them, as the Rump-in-the-bowl used to say; and he was right,' resumed Bamboche.

"'Then how did you do, when you had no more bread, and they refused to give you any?'

"'It was in autumn—the apples were on the trees; I knocked some of them off, and eat as many as I could.'

"'And what about the beggarman?'

"'One day, I was sleeping in a dry ditch, along a hedge, not far from a highway; I heard a noise and awoke; I looked through the hedge: it was a *Rump-in-the-bowl*,* with his legs tied up; he drew near, walking on his hands, which he had thrust into his wooden shoes instead of gloves; he sat down, undid the straps by which his legs were fastened to his neck, dropped them to the ground and stood up; he then began to tramp, to leap up, and to dance in order to remove the sensation of stiffness: his legs were as good as anybody's.'

"'Why then did he pretend to be so?'

"'To cheat the world, to be sure, and catch charity. As he passed by the hedge several times, he saw me; then in his passion and fury at being surprised and detected, he picked up one of his shoes, leaped over the hedge, and accosted me thus:—'If you have the misfortune to say that you saw me, and that I am only a sham Rump-in-the-bowl, I will find you out and break your head with my wooden shoes.'—I was frightened—I began to cry; for at that time I was soft like you. I cried, and then I blubbered out:—'Whom should I tell that you are not a true Rump-in-the-bowl?'—'Your parents, if you belong to these parts.'—'I don't belong to these parts, and I have no parents.'—'How do you get your living——?'

"'Stop,' said I to Bamboche, interrupting him: 'that's just like my meeting with La Levrasse.'

"'You found a regular pearl on that day,' returned Bamboche, and he proceeded:

"'How do you get your living?' inquired the beggar.—'I sleep in the fields; and I eat apples and grapes when I find any.'—'Will you beg along with me? I am tired of playing a rump-in-the-bowl: it gives me the cramp in my legs and arms, and corns on my hands; by way of change, I will pretend to be blind; you shall be my son; you shall guide me along, and we will make plenty of money and live in clover.'

"'I consented to go with the Rump-in-the-bowl; we waited till night, and then we walked on a great way to get out of the country where he was known as a Rump-in-the-bowl; the next day we began to beg: he as a blind man, I as his son.'

"'Was he ever spiteful to you?'

"'When charity lagged he would say it was my fault; and at night he pummelled me well.'

"'Why did n't you leave so hard a master?'

"'I hated him, but I did not leave him: for where had I to go to? At any rate, with him I was sure to have a belly full; besides, he taught me such things.'

"'What things?'

"'Well, he taught me how to live so as not to *sink* and be trampled on.'

"I looked at Bamboche: I could not understand him.

"'What a spoony you must be!' said he with a smile of disdain.

"Then he added, as if through condescension for my simplicity:

"'The Rump-in-the-bowl taught me *that the wolves alone are not eaten, and that it is necessary to be a wolf; that when a stronger than you hurts you you must revenge yourself upon a weaker;—that nobody cares for you; that you must care for nobody; that you may do any thing you choose, if you do it slily;—that honest people are canary birds, and rich people villains and plunderers;—that none but simpletons work, and they get their reward by being starved.*'

"'Your father did not think so, nor say so? did he?'

"'My father worked like a horse, and died for want of help, half eaten by the crows; I asked for nothing but a bit of bread, and they set a dog upon me to drive me away,' answered Bamboche with a bitter laugh; 'the Rump-in-the-bowl did nothing but walk about, and impose on the world, and had plenty of every thing. What jolly suppers we used to indulge in—with the alms of the charitable! So you see the Rump-in-the-bowl told the truth.'

"In my turn, quite puzzled, and not knowing what to reply to Bamboche, I remained silent.

"He proceeded with a knowing look, as if he chuckled at his recollections:

"'Besides, he used to speak to me about *the women!*' said Bamboche, whose eyes sparkled as he spoke, with precocious ardour.

"'About the women?' echoed I with simple surprise.

"'Why yes, about his mistresses, whom he used to beat, and who still gave him money.'

"I did not understand, and for fear of being laughed at by my young comrade, I said to him:

"'Well! you left the beggar at last?'

"'They arrested us both.'

"'Who did?'

"'The *gendarmes*.'

"'What for?'

"'They told the Rump-in-the-bowl, but not me; they locked us up in a barn; we were to have been carried to the next town on the following day. During the night I awoke, and saw him boring through the wall to get off without me. I told him that unless he took me along with him, I would give the alarm; so he was afraid: I helped him in the job, and we fled together. When once we were at a safe distance, he said to me:—'You are in my way, and would be the cause of my being known;'—so he dealt me a heavy blow on the head; I fell senseless to the ground, and thought myself dead; but my sconce is a hard one, and so I recovered. When I found myself all alone, I still begged along the roads and at the door of the postmasters' stages. I then got a few pence: I used to *turn the wheel* before gentlemen's carriages, and got more—indeed I was never without bread. About a year ago, I met La Levrasse with his troop and his waggon; I turned the wheel to try and get his penny; he called me a smart boy, and asked me if I had any parents——'

"'Like he did me.'

"'I told him I had none, and that I lived by begging. He said that if I liked, he would teach me a trade, give me fine clothes, plenty to eat, a few coppers for my private use, and that instead of going afoot, I should ride in a carriage. I accepted the offer; he put me up in the long vehicle, and told me I should be called *Bamboche* instead of Peter: since then I have lived with him, and so I shall continue to do, until——'

"'Until when shall you stay with him?'

"'That 's my business,' answered Bamboche with a gloomy thoughtful look.

"'But what trade was it La Levrasse promised to teach you?'

"'I have been a year at it—you will learn it as well—you will soon know what it is.'

"'What have we to do?'

* *Cul de jatte* signifies a man who having lost his legs, or the use of them, goes and slides along with his hams in a bowl, moving forward with his hands. We have translated the French word *verbatim—Rump in the bowl.*

"'Feats of strength and agility, to entertain the public.'

"'To entertain the public?'

"'Yes, at the fairs.'

"I opened my eyes now, and stared at Bamboche.

"'Why yes—I have already exercised in public; Mother Bigbone held me by the feet, my head down, my arms crossed, and I picked up a penny with my teeth; or she would tie one of my legs to my neck, and then I whirled about on the other leg—besides many other feats of the kind.'

"'And that's what they want to teach me?' cried I with terror.

"'Yes, and they do it with the help of a cat-o'-nine-tails and unlocking your bones; your screams will wake me hereafter as mine of last night awoke you,' said Bamboche with a savage smile.

"'Oh! my God! what you must have suffered!'

"'Not so much at first, for Mother Bigbone taught me the trade, quite gently, and without ever beating me; she dressed me well, and gave me many nice dainties on the sly, unknown to La Levrasse. And when we exercised in public, she assisted me, and made the feats as easy as she could; but now the old sow leaves me in tatters, keeps me on bread and water, and beats me for nothing; I must learn the most difficult postures and feats in a week, and she knocks me down, because, when my head has been long upside down on the ground, my blood suffocates me.'

"'And why is it Mother Bigbone, so indulgent to you before, has now become so spiteful?'

"'You see, because I used at first to be *her lover*, and now I won't be so any more,' answered Bamboche scornfully.

"Again I did not understand Bamboche, and in my candid astonishment, exclaimed:

"'What! her lover? what is that?'

"My new friend burst into a stentorian shout, and replied:

"'*Don't you know what it is to be a woman's lover?*—at your age too. What an innocent pigeon!'

"I was then about eleven; Bamboche himself was not thirteen.

"'No,' said I to him, confused and blushing at my ignorance.*

"Then with incredible assurance, and in a tone of jeering superiority, little Bamboche, without scruple or disguise, enlightened my childish innocence, and related to me how *Mother Bigbone had seduced him.*

"At that period, almost without the least notion of good and evil, I was not, nor could I be, struck with the repulsive, horrible, and monstrous depravity of that giant Messalina; and therefore, Bamboche's cynical revelation only excited a strong degree of astonishment, accompanied by that kind of shame ever occasioned by the fear of ridicule; for I blushed a great deal to have been ignorant so long.

"'And why won't you still be the lover of Mother Bigbone?' said I to him disconcerted by this unexpected revelation.

"Bamboche did not answer me at first.

"He paused for a minute or two; then, giving way to that desire natural to lovers at every age, to unbosom themselves, and reflecting for the first time, (as since he has told me) that a friend became a necessary confidant; and yielding at the same time to a feeling of sympathy, as inexplicable as it was involuntary, which I had kindled in his heart, he said to me, with sincere emotion:

"'Listen to me. When you came in, I was glad to do you harm, because it has long been done me: you resisted stoutly—you got me under you, and that made me worse. At that moment, do you see, I could have strangled you; but afterwards, when I saw you weep instead of trying to defend yourself, and weep because I would not be your friend, why, I felt my heart swell as it had never done before, since the death of my father, and I don't know how it was that I wished all at once to speak to you about him, and tell you my story, which I had never told to any body. Therefore, now, if you like to be friends with me—'

"And then as, in an impulse of unspeakable joy, I was about to throw my arms about his neck, Bamboche checked my transports, and said:

"'Wait a bit, if we are friends—I must be master.'

"'You shall be master.'

"'You must do whatever I like.'

"'Yes.'

"'If they hurt me,—you must revenge me—'

"'Never fear, I am no coward.'

"'You must tell me all you hear from La Levrasse and Mother Bigbone.'

"'Every word.'

"'You won't keep any of your thoughts from me?'

"'None—nor you either?'

"'Whatever I ask you to do for me, I will do for you,' cried Bamboche, 'only I make a point of being master, because that's my way; I will tell you all; you shall tell me every thing; I will revenge you as you shall revenge me—and we will always brew our plots together. Are you content?'

"Quite content—and heartily,' exclaimed I, happy and proud, after all my trouble and anxiety, to have gained my object, and to possess *a friend.*

"'Now,' resumed Bamboche with an eagerness which showed how delighted he was to have met with a *confidant*, 'now I must tell you whom I am in love with.'

"'It is not with Mother Bigbone?' said I with fresh surprise.

"Bamboche shrugged up his shoulders.

"'You will always be a *pigeon!*' said he.

"Then, with affectionate pity, he added:

"'I see I shall have something to do to sharpen you; but I will be your teacher as the Rump-in-the-bowl was to me.'

"'Thank you, Bamboche,' said I, affected with gratitude; 'but who is it you are in love with, since it is no longer with Mother Bigbone?'

"'I am going to tell you,' replied Bamboche.

"And here I awaited his recital with the most lively curiosity."

CHAPTER VI.

HOW LITTLE BAMBOCHE FELL DEEPLY IN LOVE WITH LITTLE BASQUINE; AND HOW THE HEARTLESS MOUNTEBANK, TEMPTED A POOR FATHER TO SELL ONE OF HIS CHILDREN TO FEED THE REST.

"WHEN Bamboche uttered those words: 'I am going to tell you whom I am in love with,' his large eyes shone with dazzling fire; his pale face grew slightly flushed; his countenance, which had till then appeared so harsh and ironical, assumed an expression of loving tenderness; he looked almost handsome.

"'When I joined the troop,' said he, 'it consisted of a juggler, an Albinos who used to swallow sword-blades, and an ugly little girl about ten years of age, as thin as a nail, and black as a toad, who danced, played on the guitar, and played her feats nimbly enough with Mother Bigbone; but as during her exercises, her neck, arms, and legs were constantly naked, and as her frame was very weak, she was always shivering, and coughing a dry cough.

* Let no puritanical reader pretend to wonder at this dialogue: the same precocious communications are made every day by boys, and girls too, younger than Bamboche and Martin, in every large town in England and Ireland, in almost every class of society; and this very dialogue is innocence itself compared to what is really spoken, *and the language in which it is expressed.—Translator's note.*

They made her sing and exercise a hundred times too often for her age and strength; it killed her by degrees. She was, besides, as mild as a sheep, and ready to do any thing she could. When her exercises were over, she would steal into a corner, spoke but little, and never laughed; she had small blue eyes, gentle and sad, and in spite of her ugliness one liked to behold her. Mother Bigbone, who, I really believe, had become jealous of her on my account, was more spiteful to her after my arrival, so much that the little creature became seriously ill, and died during one of our circuits. I do n't know where she came from, nor how La Levrasse had engaged her to join his troop.'

"'Poor little girl!' said I to Bamboche; 'I was thinking it was with her you were in love.'

"'No, no, you shall see. La Levrasse had given her the name of *Basquine*, as he gave me the name of *Bamboche*. When she was dead, he said to Mother Bigbone:—'We must find out another Basquine, but a prettier one; a little girl of that age is always useful in a troop, especially when she is pretty, and sings blackguard songs to inflame the young hands.'—'You are right, answered mother Bigbone, we must seek out another Basquine.'—Well! two months ago, just at the end of our season of exercises, the troop was falling to pieces: the Albinos had swallowed the blade cross-ways, and was gone to the hospital; and our juggler had left us to go into the Seminary and assume the cassock.'

"'Into the Seminary?'

"'So they call the house where you are taught to be a priest; it was a pity, for there could not be a more diverting vagabond than Giroflée.'

"'Who was Giroflée?'

"The juggler I 'm speaking of. Besides, his hair was naturally of a dark carrotty red, and saved the expense of a wig. There was none left in the troop but La Levrasse, Mother Bigbone, and me; the bad season was approaching: there was no more to be done in our way for another year; we were returning hitherward, where La Levrasse puts up every winter, when one evening, after our day's march, we stopped in a borough to pass the night; there was some repairs wanting for the carriage: La Levrasse took it to a wheelwright, and returned home afterwards to the inn with looks of gladness.—'I have found what we want,' said he to Mother Bigbone, 'I have discovered a new Basquine.'—'Indeed! where?'—'At the wheelwright's; he has eleven children—six of them girls; the eldest of the brood is a boy of fourteen; they are all starving—a real famine—and the mother is bed-ridden. But do you know what I saw amidst that batch of children? a little girl of ten years old—quite a love! a treasure—splendid flaxen hair all over curls, black eyes, as long as your finger, a mouth like a cherry, a small shape, slender and upright like a reed, and withal such a genteel, pretty look—enough, indeed, for several girls. She is indeed rather pale, because she is starving with hunger like the rest of them; but with milk and meat she will grow red and white. I see her already in her red frock and silver spangles, showing her graces from the top of a pyramid of men, or singing in her pretty little child's voice such smutty songs as: *Mon ami Vincint*, or *Merè Arsouille*; and that will make the silver fall more plentifully about us than the copper used to do with that other sickly chest-drained Basquine.'—'But how can you get hold of her?'—asked Mother Bigbone.—'I said to the wheelwright: Poor man, you and your family are starving with cold, hunger, and thirst.'—'True,'—answered the clodpole,—'I have eleven young children and a bed-ridden wife—twelve mouths to feed: 'tis too much for one man to bear.'—'Will you have but eleven mouths to feed for the future, my good man?'—The wheelwright looked at me bewildered.—'Yes, I undertake to provide for your eldest girl, there, that fair-haired litle thing now staring at us with all her little might. I will take her home; you shall leave her with me until she is eighteen, and I will teach her a good business.'—'Jeannette,'—cried the poor man, with tears in his eyes,—'what! part with my little treasure? I have no other joy, no never.'—'Come, my brave fellow, be reasonable; it will be one mouth less to feed.'—'I do n't know whether I could part with any other of my children; it would be with great sorrow. Yet, our misery is so great, it would be for its advantage only; but Jeannette, Jeannette! oh, never!'—'As for taking any other of the children, instead of the fair-haired girl,'—said La Levrasse to Mother Bigbone,—'thanks for the present: figure to yourself a covey of young owlets; I do n't know how that pretty little linnet could have been born in such an ugly nest.'—'No, Jeannette and no other,'—said I, to the wheelwright,—'and what is more, my worthy, I will give you down a hundred francs in good coin, but then you must leave her with me till she is twenty.'—'A hundred francs,'—replied the clodpole, 'a hundred francs!'—He was quite bewildered; in his state of penury it seemed a treasure. He stared so much that I felt sure he was going to let go his Jeannette, for he called her to him, took her between his arms, kissed her pretty white head a hundred times over, devoured her with caresses, and wept like a calf. But, psha! suddenly the dull beast said to me:—'Get you gone, sir,—get you gone; I shall keep Jeannette: if we starve, well, starve we shall, but she sha'n't leave me.'—'Then you have not got little Basquine?,—said Mother Bigbone to him; nor was she sorry for it in her jealousy.—'Wait a while,'—resumed La Levrasse; 'I said to the wheelwright:—'Listen to me, good man: I will not take a mean advantage of your misery; reflect upon the matter until to-morrow; instead of one hundred francs, I will give you three hundred francs for Jeannette; you will find me to-morrow until noon at the Tall Stag Inn, and, after that if you change your mind, you can write to me at the address on this card which I leave you.' Thereupon, I left the wheelwright, and I am sure he will come to me to-morrow morning, at the first crowing of the cock, with the little flaxen-haired child.'

"'Well! did he come?' I inquired of Bamboche.

"'No; but I who, whilst I pretended to sleep, had heard La Levrasse say to Mother Bigbone all I have been relating to you, felt curious to see this new Basquine; so I got up very early, stole out of the inn, and asked for the wheelwright's abode; then I hastened to it, and——'

"Bamboche's recital was here interrupted by the burly voice of Mother Bigbone, who cried out from the top of the cellar stairs, 'Ho, there! Martin—Bamboche, come to your pie!'

"'We are called,' said my new friend hastily, 'I will tell you the rest another time; but when I reached the wheelwright's, what I saw and heard of Jeannette made me so fond—so very fond of her, that since then I have thought of nothing else. Her father would not part with her at that time; but a few days ago I heard La Levrasse say to Mother Bigbone, that the wheelwright had just written to him, and that as soon as a *man-fish* that he expects had arrived, we should go to the little borough to fetch away Jeannette, the new Basquine.'

"'But, thunder of heaven! are you deaf then?' cried Mother Bigbone once more; 'must I come down to you, little toads?'

"'Here we are, madame; here we are,' said I. Then, throwing my arms round Bamboche's neck, I said to him with emotion:

"'We are friends, are we not—and for ever?'

"'Yes, friends,' answered Bamboche, cordially returning my strain; 'fast friends—and for ever.'

* * * * * *

"Thence dates my friendship for Bamboche.

"Shortly after I became acquainted with Basquine.

"Strange and inexplicable persons! whom I have always loved as much as they have loved me; and whom, during the course of my life, as fully adventurous as their own, I was fated to meet so repeatedly, and under so many different circumstances."

CHAPTER VII.

HOW MARTIN, THE VALET-DE-CHAMBRE, WROTE A LETTER TO THE KING, AND HOW HE TOLD HIS MAJESTY IN THAT LETTER MANY THINGS WHICH SELDOM REACH THE EARS OF ROYALTY.

AT this part of the manuscript was added a marginal note, or letter, addressed by Martin to the king, already spoken of.

"*September*, 1845.

"SIRE,

"However puerile may seem to your Majesty the early years of a poor forsaken child, be so good as to reflect, and you will then acknowledge that this narrative touches upon the most important social questions.

"The bricklayer, whose servant I was in my childhood, used to get drunk.

"*Why did he get drunk?*

"In order to escape now and then, by intoxication, from the thoughts of the present and future, of too painful an existence.

"By a singular exception to the rule, this man used to idealize and colour with his fancy a most detestable vice—very detestable, I admit, but certainly not more to be hated than the *causes* which engender it, and often make it quite unavoidable.

"Among the many different causes of this vice, two are all-powerful:

"*To be able to forget a life of incessant struggle and privation.*

"*To dull the sense of those wants and sufferings, for ever reviving, of a starving family, whom his scanty wages cannot support.*

"No doubt there is, among the working classes, more than one man sufficiently strong, resolute, and patient, to contemplate without even closing his eyes, that gloomy and endless perspective of days, months, and years, during which, without any hope of rest, or comfort for his old age, he sees himself working—and working for ever, whilst awaiting a miserable death to close a miserable life.

"No doubt there are among the working classes men still more stoical.

"One, after twelve hours of most crushing toil, returns home at night to a gloomy, close, and pestiferous abode; he has bought with his scanty wages

a supply of bread insufficient for his hungry family; he too is hungry after his hard day's work; so too is his wife after the painful suckling of her latest born, to whom she offers a dry breast; but this inadequate food is almost all given up to the lean and haggard children.

"Yet for all that, whilst they lie on their restless bed, they shall hear those children cry and complain of hunger.

"Thus, every day shall this man arise with the dawn, run to his work and perform it, in spite of the persecution of this frightful and despairing idea by which he is for ever daunted.

"'However arduous my toil may be, however indefatigable my zeal, to-night again, and to-morrow, and for ever, I shall not have earned the means to appease the hunger of my family; their complaints will keep me awake till morning, when the hour of labour shall once more summon me abroad. And my strength, my life, must waste away thus, without any hope.'

"Yes, this man is stoical and venerable; for by withdrawing a few pence from his wages, he might go to the tavern like the rest, and there for a whole day,—do you understand me, Sire,—FOR A WHOLE DAY, purchase oblivion of the recurring cares which beset and torture him!

"And, because these courageous men are worthy of veneration, because they resist the fascination of a vice almost inevitable in their condition, because they endure their misery without repining, and without offending the laws, is it just—is it prudent, to abandon them for ever to this endurance? Because the innocent victim has resisted his torture, would you prolong his agony?

"But unfortunately all workmen are not, cannot be, endowed with this energy and strength of mind.

"There are many, too, who are stultified by ignorance, degraded by misery, stunned and bewildered by the last extinction of hope; these give way to the fatal enchantments of drunkenness, in which they forget their sorrows; others still more degraded — and, believe me, magnanimous Sovereig[illegible]r number is very small,—love drunkenness [illegible] own sake.

"These last deserve to be censured. But those are twice as culpable who would ruthlessly condemn these unfortunates to their ignorance, their destitution, and their despair; the first fatal causes of the lamentable vice which brutifies, debilitates, and kills them.

"Other reasons less deplorable, but not less fatal in their consequences, drive the victims of pauperism to drunkenness.

"It is manifest that after a week of arduous toil, a man must feel the imperative necessity of rest, diversion, and pleasure.

"There are, among the working classes, some men who, disabled by habitual and severe resignation, or weakened by privations, seek in the apathetic rest of the mind and body during the sabbath day, a sufficient compensation for their week's labour.

"Others are endowed with a certain instruction, a delicacy of thought and taste which has not yielded to the enormous burden of manual labour.

"Among this class, some look to the works of our poets and thinkers every Sunday for relaxation and amusement; others recreate themselves by the intelligent contemplation of the masterpieces of art open to the public; others again derive a pleasure from their examination of nature, and a grateful sense of her beauties and usefulness, knowing how to admire alike her greatest works and smallest creations; they are equally charmed, or touched, by the dazzling splendour of a radiant sun-set, the aspect of the starry heavens on a summer's night, or by the inquisitive examination of a bunch of wild country flowers, or an insect with its bright wings of gold and emerald.

"But of course they are not a numerous class—those worthy men, who, despite the cares, the toils of a life always hard, laboursome, precarious, often deplorable and brutifying, are yet able to acquire and preserve that keen perception, that candid sensibility, that noble faculty of thought, which must ever accompany intellectual enjoyment.

"Among the working classes there are men, who, although industrious and honest, have been brought up in ignorance and coarseness; deprived of that liberal education, which alone raises and refines the instinct of mankind, and imparts a taste for select amusements and delicate recreations.

"What is the consequence? After a week of restraint, privation, and toil, they give way to a natural and overpowering desire for pleasure.

"Hurried along by the impetuosity of youth, by a sort of feverish excitement, they plunge with eager delight into the only pleasures which on Sundays are accessible to the poor.

"Then those horrible dens, wherein they dispense poisoned wine, nauseous meats, and infected prostitutes, are filled to overflow with a noisy and vociferous throng; all about those tumultuous taverns are erected temporary stages and booths, in which, amidst the most loathsome and degrading scenes, every thing noble in humanity is derided and scoffed at in the basest language of the hulks. Farther off, there is a group of revellers, composed of old men, women, and children, singing lewd and obscene songs, and each striving to surpass the rest in rank indecency and impudence, to provoke the brutal gaiety of the bacchanals over their wine.

"All these incendiary passions thus loosened and excited, soon begin to rumble like a storm, drowning the shouts of the jugglers and mountebanks, the sound of their drums, and the pealing of their bells. A suffocating dust floats above, and throws a kind of mist around this great *orgie* of the poor.

"Night approaches; the besotted and ghastly faces of that hideous throng are exposed by the coarse red-lights; then it is that the uproar increases, with the cynic songs, and brutal joy; the spirit of drunkenness had before been roaring like the storm—now he bursts forth.

"After this tempestuous and gross hilarity, came, of course insults, then threats, then open violence; and at length blood would flow. Those visages, lately inflamed with joy and drunkenness, would turn livid, some being swollen or torn with blows, others bloody and soiled with mud. They are no longer men, or even wild beasts, but raving madmen. The terrific operations of the poisonous wine that is sold to them, precipitates them into a state frenzy. Sometimes their wives, their children, trembling, and woful to behold, have to witness these horrid scenes; women, young girls, after having had the whole day, their eyes and ears polluted by the gestures and songs of the clowns and jugglers, see a husband, a father, or a brother, become the victim of a desperate encounter, and fall down at their feet covered with blood; his poor Sunday garments are torn to ribands, or crusted with mire; he gets up staggering, and, unable to distinguish in his drunken state those dear relations, he assails them in turn, with insults and threats.

"But it grows late, the lights are extinguished, the tumult is gradually hushed; those voices, lately so vociferous, are heard to stammer, stutter, and complain; those men, just now so powerful, and violent, droop and sink within themselves.

"A dull gloomy silence, interrupted here and there by distant cries and shouts, has taken the place of that apalling uproar; many have recovered their senses, and, ashamed, dejected, and bitten with remorse, they return to their dwellings, and throw themselves in sorrow upon their wretched pallets, already mindful of the morrow's toil.

"Yes, all that is hideous; yes, it is horrible; yes, the mind revolts against it; yes, the heart bleeds to

see *these creatures of the one God, endowed with an immortal soul, and having within them all the germs of* THE FINE *and* THE JUST, taking pleasure, and degrading themselves in pleasures so frivolous and abject.

"But before we venture to condemn them, tell me where are the high, delicate, and ennobling pleasures to be looked for by these wretched men, in exchange for those brutal enjoyments?

"What proofs of care, sympathy, and solicitude, do you give to this multitude? They were not forgotten as instruments of labour, and when you wanted to make a profit of their strength, their industry, their skill. But what care was ever taken of their comforts or enjoyments? Yes, I repeat it, their enjoyments—and why not? Has it never struck you that these men, above all, stand in need of diversion, of relaxation, after a long day of painful toil? Has any attempt been made to dignify, to elevate their amusements? Those men who enrich the country in time of peace, and who defend it in time of war? Has the government, in the name of the country, opened once a week, *any spacious arena of befitting pleasures, where every one might meet with gentle and pure recreation to charm, comfort, and improve him?*

"No, no—this has not been done. What right then have you to blame those unfortunate men, for plunging into coarse and vulgar enjoyments, the only ones within the reach of their penury and their uneducated minds?

"Sire, a few words more and I have done.

"In this sincere exposure of the different events of my life, you will often meet again the two companions of my early childhood.

"Bamboche, the son of the wood cleaver, that forsaken boy, who, after seeing his father die for want of help, in the midst of the woods, was repulsed with so heartless a disdain, when, for the first time, he applied to a rich man for *employment and bread.*

"This boy, fallen at once into the clutches of an abominable vagabond, and taught by him to practise the arts of tricking and cheating, then cast, by destitution, into the hands of mountebanks, who, by their examples of depravity and savageness, taught him vice and hatred.

"Basquine, the daughter of a poor mechanic, who, driven to his last shifts by misery and starvation, is on the point of selling her to a pair of jugglers, who resolve to reap an infamous profit out of her innocence, beauty, grace, and candour.

"Whatever may be the future fate of these two desolate beings, Sire, before you condemn them by an inexorable sentence, be pleased to remember what their childhood has been, and then blame will, perhaps, give place to pity—to the most profound and sorrowful compassion.

"And these examples, Sire, are not merely exceptions: among all those whose fatal lot it is to be cast into fathomless abysses of wickedness and corruption, there are very, very few who would not have been honest and well-conducted, if the first years of their lives had not been spent in dissentient misery, and corruption; for believe me, Sire, almost all the crimes of men are the consequences, not of any evil nature in themselves, but of misgovernment in the state which rules over them."

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE EDUCATION WHICH MONSIEUR LA LEVRASSE AND MOTHER BIGBONE GAVE THE LITTLE BOY MARTIN AND HIS COMRADE, BAMBOCHE.

"LA LEVRASSE and Mother Bigbone fearing, no doubt, that I might try to escape, kept a strict watch over me; but these were useless precautions.

"'Yes, we shall be friends; true friends; and for ever,' Bamboche said to me, after our first interview, which, beginning with a smart exchange of blows, had yet ended by a most cordial embrace.

"Bamboche manifested as much fidelity as I did myself to this pledge of reciprocal regard. It was a strange contradiction to see that young boy, with his stubborn character, and juvenile depravity, with his sullen maliciousness and cold brutality, testifying, in my behalf, the most tender and devoted attachment. I must confess that had it not been for the existence of that brotherly friendship which I had so long coveted, and that close attachment which bound me so suddenly and strongly to the companion of my misfortunes, I should have endeavoured to escape by flight from the cruel apprenticeship of my new trade.

"All the time which was not devoted to my *lessons*, was spent with Bamboche. I listened to him as he spoke of Basquine, with a warmth and sincerity of passion which, when I reflect upon it now, seems to me extraordinary in so young a child. Sometimes he melted into tears as he thought of the cruel fate that awaited the poor child; for he recollected the sad life, and the still sadder end, of the former Basquine: at other times he leapt for joy, when he thought that, in a few days, the wheelwright's daughter would become our companion; and there were also times when he would break out into fierce threats against La Levrasse and Mother Bigbone, at the bare idea of Basquine being beaten like ourselves.

"By constantly hearing him speak of our future companion with such passionate ardour, I came at last, partly out of affection for Bamboche and partly through excited curiosity, to long for the arrival of Basquine with the most impatient anxiety.

"Whether it was that Mother Bigbone did not think me worthy to succeed in her affections to the faithless Bamboche, or that she dissembled her intentions, for fear of alarming me, she never said a word to me of *love*, and appeared to treat me with the greatest harshness.

"In spite of her flattering prognostications—which foretold that in less than a month I should perform very satisfactorily the *rabbit's leap* and other exercises, my constitution had proved more rebellious than my will to the lessons of my instructress.

"My first employment as a labourer had taught me to stoop forward as I went along, under the weight of a hod too heavy for my strength, whilst Mother Bigbone required me, on the contrary, not only to sink my shoulders, but to throw my body backwards like a crescent. The first stage in my progress was to walk upright, instead of bending my back; my shape, which no doubt would have grown deformed, was thus forcibly righted: that is nearly the only obligation I am under to Mother Bigbone.

Daily did she inflict upon me a kind of torture, by training me to what—in the slang of the profession—she styled the *unlocking of the bones.* These are the contrivances to which she resorted, to impart to me these elementary and indispensable notions of the *art.*

"Every morning, she tied alternately to each of my wrists a weight of three or four pounds; after which she compelled me, on pain of severe chastisement, to move round and describe a circle with my arms: first slowly, then more rapidly, my shoulder acting as the pivot. When once I was borne along by the weight at my wrist, which increased a hundred-fold the speed of the motion, I felt my articulation distend with frightful pulls; then I thought my arm became longer, and stretched out enormously, as fast as this impetuous wheeling motion became more rapid.

"A childish feeling which I cannot account for, sometimes made me close my eyes, in spite of my

acute suffering, in order that in my case, the illusion might be complete; and I could then have actually sworn that my arm, as it continued to describe these circles, became extended to a length of ten feet.

"In my conversations with Bamboche, we used to call that exercise, *making the long arm.*

"Next my legs were submitted to another exercise of a similar kind, by the same means of fastening a weight to each ankle in turn. This time it was not a rotary motion I was put to perform, but that of a pendulum, the haunch serving as the articulate point, and the foot as the balance. The same pains broke out again, with perhaps still greater acuteness in the joints of the thigh, the knee, and the foot; here again the same singular illusion returned, making me believe that my limbs grew longer and longer in proportion as this exercise became more accelerated in its course.

"The lesson was concluded with a feat which Mother Bigbone used to call the *torticolmuche.*

"Bamboche had told me that, when he was first initiated to this new torture, he had a narrow escape of losing his senses. I thought he spoke too strongly, at first; but taught afterwards by experience, I felt the truth of my young comrade's observation.

"Mother Bigbone would lay hold of my head just above the ears, which she held between her huge thumb and fore-finger, and pinched me till the blood came if I offered the least resistance; then squeezing my skull between her two massive hands, as tightly as a vice, she would push my head about backwards and forwards and from side to side, with so violent and swift a jerk that my neck felt as if it had been twisted. Soon after there came over me a sense of dizziness mingled with shooting pains so sharp, that my eyes seemed to start out of my head, and my brains rocked and swung to and fro in its bony case. Each of these shocks used to cause me unutterable agony.

"A sort of temporary bewilderment almost constantly, in my case, followed this exercise, which completed the lesson. It might well complete it; for the body was quite inert and useless for some time after.

"As for the rest, I must own that the *unlocking of the bones* was producing its fruits; I thus gradually acquired, at the cost of torturing pains, an astonishing elasticity of body; certain postures, and twistings of the limbs, which would have been physically impossible for me, began to be easy and familiar; but my dreadful instructress did not stop there; when she found *my bones sufficiently unlocked,* she wanted to set me to practise the *promenade à la Turque*—the Turk's walk. Why was it called Turk? I don't know. This was the way of doing the thing:

"Mother Bigbone would make me sit down on the ground, on a bed of straw, tied my right hand to my right foot, and my left hand to my left foot, and then began rolling me over and over like a ball, at the risk of breaking my ribs, and almost after each lesson, a sort of blood-gathering, to relieve which she would throw a pail of water over me. This unexpected shower-bath used to recall me to life, and we passed on to a new exercise.

"In public, the Turk's walk was executed at liberty—that is to say, that instead of the hands and feet being bound and the impulse being given by another, we had to lay hold of our toes and roll along of our own accord.

"Several weeks thus passed away, during which La Levrasse was frequently absent; on different occasions, he brought back a collection of *heads of hair* of all kinds of colour: for he went on with his trade of dealing in the hair of poor indigent girls.

"My affection for Bamboche grew stronger day by day, for the very reason that, all impudent and spiteful as he was to others, he was good and affectionate to me—in his way; he had witnessed the torture I had endured from the Turk's walk, but, to my great surprise, he had neither pitied nor comforted me; for several days he seemed thoughtful and absent; I noticed that he stole up very often to an empty barn, where he continued to bide a long while. He had some secret which he kept from me; but my pride prevented me from seeking to forestall his confidence.

"One day I went out, broken and stupified by my lesson: the Turk's walk had been continued longer than usual; I felt a cruel pain at my wrist, for I had once fallen out of place, and Mother Bigbone had beaten me for my awkwardness; I met Bamboche in high glee; but on hearing of my accident, his face suddenly darkened; he fell into a rage and cursed Mother Bigbone, examined my hand with the anxious solicitude of a loving brother, then, looking at me with tears in his eyes, he said to me in a voice full of emotion:

"'Thank God, this is the last time you shall be beaten.'

"'The last time?' said I, astonished.

"'To-morrow, you won't be here,' answered he, after a short silence.

"'I sha'n't be here?' exclaimed I.

"'Listen! Yesterday, I heard La Levrasse speak to Mother Bigbone; to-morrow, the *man-fish* is to come, and I know the carrier who is to bring him: he 's a good fellow. I have taken a long rope out of the garret, and made knots in it: I have carefully concealed it. There 's a sky-light overlooking the fields; you can easily get through it, since I, who am bigger than you, have already tried and passed through myself.'

"'Me pass through it? Why?'

"'Wait a bit. I will tie the rope beforehand; I took out a stake on purpose. As soon as the van which brings the *man-fish* shall begin to return, you shall make off through the sky-light; ask the carrier to take you with him, and lie hid until you are nine or ten miles away. Once out of La Levrasse's clutches, you can easily find some bricklayer to work for, or beg alms in the meantime.

"At this proposal, my heart was ready to burst. Bamboche, seeing my tears, exclaimed—

"'Why, what the devil is the matter now?'

"'You do n't love me,' said I to him, sorrowfully.

"'I!' exclaimed he, in a tone of angry reproachfulness: 'I! who am endeavouring to let you out of this place. I have been thinking of it this fortnight: I did not mention it because I wished to surprise you; and this is your gratitude."

"'Yes,' resumed I, bitterly; 'it 's all one to you whether I go away: you care nothing for me.'

"On hearing this, Bamboche fell upon me with his fists.

"Although quite used to my friend's whimsical manners, this abrupt attack, the meaning of which I did not at that time understand, irritated me exceedingly. To my fit of tenderness succeeded one of vexation, and I returned my companion blow for blow.

"'And I, who was willing to bear the loss of you! I, who risked my neck to try the rope, to see if it was long enough,' cried Bamboche, furious at my ingratitude. 'There! take that!' said he, dealing me a terrible thump along with that tender reproach.

"'And you, who told me that we should never part,' answered I, no less indignant. 'There! catch that!' and I fetched him such a kick.

"'But do n't you know all you suffer here, you blackguard?' replied Bamboche, prolonging this pathetic scene of pugilism. 'There 's for you!'

"'But you know, very well, that, provided we are together, I do n't care if they pound me in a mortar;' and I struck him in turn.

"'There 's something in that,' said Bamboche, growing more placable: 'but I stop to wait for

Basquine; otherwise, I should long ago have set fire to this barrack, and roasted La Levrasse and Mother Bigbone, and then bolted with you: but since I am detained here, you can decamp by yourself.'

"'Never; for when once Basquine arrives, if you wish to escape with her, you will need my help.'

"And here the fight was ended.

"Bamboche, always as violent in his friendship as in his enmity, made a move as if to fling himself upon me: not knowing his intention, I stood on the defensive: but it was needless. The strange boy hugged me to his breast with passionate affection, and exclaimed, in a faltering voice—

"'Martin, I shall never forget that.'

"'Nor I, either, Bamboche.'

"Saying which, I responded to his friendly strain as heartily as I had returned his fisty cuffs.

"'Thunder of Heaven! what is it I feel for you?' said he, after a pause of a few moments. 'In vain I sift the matter: I can't make it out.'

"'Nor I, either, Bamboche. You are a devil incarnate for every body else, whilst to me, on the contrary——but I can't tell what it is.'

"After another pause of pensive silence, Bamboche resumed, with a look half solemn, half jeering, which was not natural to him:—

"'I do n't know how it was I came to mention my father to you; before then I had never spoken of him to any body; but it must have melted a bit of my heart. You must then have thrust yourself into the tender place; and since then you must have stayed there like the lizard incrusted in that stone which La Levrasse shows among his tricks. And you are still more like the lizard in the stone, because, in spite of all my fond love for Basquine, you have not been driven from your place. Besides, it seems as if, since I have been friends with you, it amuses me still more to be spiteful to others; and as if I had a right to be so.'

"'Well, it 's understood, I shall be your lizard, Bamboche; I will never leave my snug little corner, and you must not talk to me any more of going away without you.'

"'No: but when Basquine comes, after a few days, and the first good opportunity we have, we shall bolt—all three of us together.'

"'Where to?'

"'Straight before us.'

"'But how shall we live?'

"'By begging: we 'll pretend to be brothers and sisters, and that our parents are dead: the *canary-birds* * will pity us, and, as Rump-in-the-Bowl used to say, we 'll pocket their money; and we shall have plenty of sport, with nothing to do but to beg for it.'

"'But when the canary-birds do n't give us anything?'

"'They won't suspect us children; we can steal.'

"'Umph! steal!' resumed I, in a pensive mood, and thinking of my old master, Limousin, who abominated stealing; so I added—

"'It would be better not to steal.'

"'Why?'

"'Because it is wrong."

"'Why is it wrong?'

"'I do n't know; not I: but old Limousin said it was wrong.'

"'But I tell you it is not wrong. Would you rather believe Limousin than me?'

"'He said we ought to work for our living.'

"'Did n't my father work? and he gained nothing but death by it,' answered Bamboche, sullenly. 'The Rump-in-the-Bowl used to beg and steal too, when he was able; and that did n't prevent my father and I from living so poorly, that our very best meal never equalled the very worst that fell to Rump-in-the-Bowl. And I, also, before I took to begging, asked the passers-by for work, after my father was dead. Did they give me work? No. Who ever cared about me? Nobody. Do the wolves ever work? When the wolf is hungry, why, he eats. Work, indeed! God save us! La Levrasse and Mother Bigbone do not work: they steal such children as us; they turn and twist our limbs about; belabour us with blows, and make us dance like learned monkeys before a gaping public, and thus they eat fat meat every day, and fill their tills. And should I ever lay hands on their money-box, never fear. We shall laugh at them yet; so do n't be uneasy. If I did not expect Basquine,'—and as he uttered that name his eyes sparkled; his large bulky chest heaved,—'we should be far from here long ago. But have patience; and you 'll see the jolly life we shall lead, all three together: as free and merry as the birds, and taking as freely what we want, wherever we find it. And do they ever ask permission to pick up what they require to subsist them, eh? What could he have answered to that, your old canary-bird, Limousin?'

"'Nay; but listen, Bamboche, you and I are not birds.'

"'Are we more, or less? Do you think yourself better than a bird?' inquired Bamboche, in a most stately tone of voice.

"'I do think myself better than a bird,' answered I, convincedly, enlightened by my young friend as to my personal value.

"'If so be,' rejoined Bamboche, triumphantly grinning at me, and enjoying the dilemma he was about to propose: 'if so be we are better than birds, *pray, why should we not have the right to do what they do, and pick up what we want to live upon?*'

"I confess the dilemma puzzled me exceedingly, nor could I answer it.

"Besides, like so many other deserted children cast out upon the world, I had no notion either of good or evil, of right or wrong. I had indeed retained in my memory some few severe sayings of Limousin my master against theft; but these sayings, which were simply affirmative, could not leave any deep impression on my mind, nor help me to struggle with the alluring paradoxes of my little comrade; for I must acknowledge that that woodland life, airy and unconfined, to be spent with Bamboche and Basquine, that free and venturesome career, supported by the charitable subsidies of the good-natured *canary-birds*, and, at the worst, by more hazardous contrivances, seemed to me the highest pitch of human enjoyment."

CHAPTER XI.

HOW LITTLE BAMBOCHE WAS FOUND OUT, AND GOT INTO TROUBLE, AND HOW THE LEARNED MAN-FISH WAS BROUGHT TO THE JUGGLER'S HOUSE.

"On the evening of the same day as I had refused to take advantage of the means of escape provided for me by Bamboche, La Levrasse beckoned to me to follow him into the *hair*-room.

"That man, with his dry and fitful grimaces, his sedate look, his false, canting smile, his shrill voice, his thin tight-drawn lips, and sardonic smile, frightened me still more than Mother Bigbone; in spite of her big husky voice and huge fists, there were times, when seeing me steeped in sweat, dizzy in the head, and my eyes blood-shot, she would suspend my exercises and give me a few moments' relief; but when La Levrasse was present, he showed me no pity.

"'Come, come, little Martin,' he would say in a tone of affected mildness; 'you are warm, do n't

* *Serins*, or canary-birds, in the slang used by the class to which these two poor children belonged, means those credulous, good-natured people, who are politely called *green*.

let us get cool—'t is unhealthy, lad. If you stop I shall be obliged to take down the cat and measure you a flannel jacket; but you won't be allowed to wear it until you are turned seventy.'

"Then he would look at me with a grotesque smile, like the clown in the play.

"I was consequently very much alarmed on finding myself alone with the mountebank in the *hair*-room. After he had shut the door, he said to me:

"'Little Martin, I am so much pleased with you, that I must give you a proof of confidence.'

"I stared at him with astonishment.

"'Leonidas Shark comes here to-morrow.'

"'Leonidas Shark, master?'

"'Yes,' continued La Levrasse, 'it is the name of the *man-fish*; and as you are the newest boy, the light little jobs concern you.'

"'What little job, master?'

"'A confidential trust, mind; for that vagabond Bamboche would be capable of throttling him, or leaving him without water.'

"'And my little job, master; what is it to be?'

"'You will feed the man-fish, since he has nothing but his fins, poor thing, and they do n't help to hold a knife and fork.'

"'I must feed the man-fish, master?'

"'And change his water every day, little Martin; for he lives in a large vessel in his quality of a fresh water fish.'

"'Change his water every day!' exclaimed I, with increasing consternation at these new functions.

"'You must also give him twice a day to drink some Nile water, of which he has a supply, not being able to drink any other: it is the water of his native river; but take good care of your fingers for he bites. He is descended on his grandfather's side from the royal family of the Egyptian crocodiles; and his ancestors were the sacred Caimans, who are revered and honoured by that brutish race.'

"These words, delivered in the usual tone and jargon of the juggler, who, stick in hand, explains a phenomenon, were cut short by the abrupt entrance of Mother Bigbone; she rushed like a whirlwind into the *hair*-room.

"Fierce and threatening in her looks, this female Alcides held in her hand a thick well-rope carefully washed and tied into knots at intervals.

"A presentiment told me it was the same rope as Bamboche had spoken of to me, and which was to have been used for my escape.

"'He wanted to bolt away, that villain, Bamboche,' cried Mother Bigbone; 'I suspected his tricks, and saw him, just now, steal up like a wolf into the garret, near the pigeon-house; I followed him, without being seen, and surprised him with this rope under his arm.'

"'Ah, ah!' roared La Levrasse, with a facial contortion which made me shudder.

"'More than that: he had hafted a kind of hook to the skylight, to make fast the rope, and get away.'

"'Oh, oh!' cried La Levrasse, with a second grimace, still more grotesque.

"'I have tied him up in the cellar, the ruffian! Where 's the use of giving an education, and teaching a trade to those sharpers, to see them make off as soon as they are able to practise it?' cried Mother Bigbone. 'But I will show him.'

"La Levrasse stopped her.

"'Stay, mother: he does not mind your soft corrections; you make more noise than you hurt, mother. Now, I am as quiet as a mole in his house: you never hear me at all: and my little advices penetrate more deeply into the skin than your heavy bursts of rage. So he is in the cellar, is he, little Bamboche?'

"'Yes, and strongly bound; although he wanted to eat my hands.'

"'I will go and pay him a visit,' said La Levrasse, in his soothing voice.'

"So off he went towards the door, with a slow, nimble step, like a wild cat going to lie down and watch for his prey.

"Never, since my arrival at the house, had La Levrasse himself inflicted chastisement on Bamboche; therefore, the threats and departure of the mountebank made my blood run cold on my comrade's account.

"A moment after, Mother Bigbone raised my terror to its highest pitch, by seizing the arm of La Levrasse, and saying to him, in a low voice—

"'Do n't go too far, mind.'

"'Fear nothing, mother; *we shall only want him in a fortnight*,' answered La Levrasse; 'so do n't curdle your blood for nothing: you won't hear any noise. I do things quietly; I never make any fuss, you know; none whatever.'

"So the juggler left the room, humming as he went, 'I never make any fuss; none whatever, none whatever.'

"'I do n't care,' said Mother Bigbone, to herself, with looks of evident anxiety, in spite of her usual harshness, and, probably, forgetting I was there; 'I do n't care; I 'll go too; it will be more prudent: La Levrasse has got something bad in his eye to-night.'

"Then, throwing down the bundle of rope she held under her arm, she advanced towards the door, leaving me in despair; for it was on my account, for having tried to let me escape, that Bamboche was about to endure a punishment, which seemed, to me so much more to be dreaded, as it was involved in mystery.

"Then, seizing Mother Bigbone by the arm—

"'It was I who wanted to escape,' exclaimed I; 'it was for me Bamboche got the rope ready; it was I who asked him for it; it is I you must punish.'

"'Oh! you wanted to escape, did you; that 's a good thing to know,' said Mother Bigbone, scanning me all over. 'So that villain, Bamboche, helped you: one 's as bad as the other. You want to cheat us out of the trade we are teaching you; but wait a bit, for I am here.'

"So saying, Mother Bigbone left me alone in the *hair*-room, and double locked the door.

"In the fulness of my despair, I flung myself on the floor, I burst into tears, and accused myself of being the involuntary cause of Bamboche's punishment.

"This first crisis of pain being passed, I listened to hear the cries of my companion.

"But the deepest silence reigned through the house.

"I climbed up to the little window, grated with two cross iron bars, but could see nothing.

"Night came. At supper time I heard a knock at my door, and soon after, La Levrasse's voice.

"'Little Martin, you shall go to bed supperless, you are agitated and this will pacify you; to-morrow the man-fish your new acquaintance will be here to comfort you.'

"I passed a dreadful night, a hundred times more painful than the one I had passed, in this same room, on my first arrival at the juggler's.

"Towards midnight, broken with weariness, and fretful sorrow, I fell asleep, and my rest was disturbed by alarming dreams; I beheld Bamboche subjected to most cruel torture, and heard him exclaim:—'Martin, Martin, it 's your fault.'—In the midst of these terrifying dreams, the monstrous shape of the *man-fish* would appear to me; he gave chase to me, nor could I escape his sharp and, lacerating gripes.

"Two loud knocks at my door made me start out of my sleep in the midst of this dream. It was broad-day. I listened, and heard the voice of La Levrasse.

"'Make haste, little Martin: the man-fish has just come, and is waiting for his little attendant.'

"The door was then opened, and this reality connecting itself with my dream, I was terrified and

looked, with haggard eyes at La Levrasse; next remembering the different incidents of the previous day:

"'And where is Bamboche?' said I.

"'Bamboche? He is more lucky than you—he is enjoying himself in the fields—he 's got holidays for some days.'

"Then, after a pause he added:

"So, you wanted to run away, little Martin! You ought not to forsake papa and mamma that way,—it is not pretty.'

"'Where is Bamboche? I must see him—I will see him,' cried I. 'What did you do to him yesterday?'

"But as La Levrasse only replied by a sardonic grin, and pointing to the door, I said no more, reflecting that all my questions would be useless, but quite determined to use the liberty I had to look for my friend.

"When I reached the yard along with La Levrasse, I saw Mother Bigbone, who, displaying her enormuous strength, was helping a carrier to push along the sides of one of those long carts used by draymen to convey their barrels in, a heavy box of a singular shape, in which the man-fish was contained, as appeared by a large label in red-letters on a white ground, and bearing this inscription·

THE MAN-FISH.

A Boarder in the Establishment of Monsieur La Levrasse, the Rope-dancer.

"This oblong box, was something like a large bathing-tub, square and open at the sides; it was spread over at the top with a rough cloth cover. Two round loop-holes filled with unpolished glass, lighted the interior of this box, and several holes were perforated at the top sufficient to let in the air, but not to satisfy the curiosity of the too inquisitive spectator.

"Underneath the cover, in the back part of the box, was a large tunnel or *reservoir* apparently to receive the water which was poured into the box, and this water, when they wished to renew it, was turned off at will by means of a cock at the lower end of the box. After the box had slidden to the ground along the sides of the cart, the carrier, who was a plain simple-looking man, and who seemed to look upon his freight with a sort of mixed feeling of fear and curiosity, said to La Levrasse:

"'I hope, master, you are satisfied with this here job? I left yesterday, and here I am; the night was so mild that I only stopped to feed the horses; so you see I have driven my sixty-six miles in fifteen hours,' and La Levrasse here interrupted the carrier.

"'You took good care, did you not, to change the water of my man-fish last night, as they told you?'

"'Me, Monsieur La Levrasse? no one ever told me so.'

"'Oh! you miserable fool!' cried the juggler as if a prey to most dreadful anxiety, 'what an omission!'

"'But M. Boulingrin, where I took up the fish—no, I mean the *man*-fish, said nothing to me about it.'

"'Did he not, indeed?'

"'No, Monsieur La Levrasse; all he said was this:—'Father Lefevre, there 's a box containing a *man-fish*; he won't want any thing, for I have given him two carps and an eel for his repast, and——'

"Without stopping to hear the carrier's full justification, the juggler ran up to the box, and, glueing his mouth to one of the air-holes:

"'Leonidas, my good fellow! how do you feel?'

"A dolorous voice answered at first by a few words in an unknowu tongue, which made all our ears gape, especially the carrier's. (I have since discovered that it was a quotation from *Seneca* in the Latin language); then the voice soon after added in French:

"'Change the water! Change the water!'

"'Do you hear that, Father Lefevre,' said La Levrasse to the carrier, pompously; 'he felt so strong a necessity for fresh water, that he said so in the Egyptian dialect.'

"'Was it in Egyptian?'

"'The purest Egyptian of the Nile. So he wanted to change his water; I was sure of it,' resumed La Levrasse with uneasiness; "for he is, in respect to fresh water, as nice and delicate as a leech. Oh! Father Lefevre,' continued he in a voice of solemnity and reproachfulness, 'you will, perhaps, be the cause of a great disaster.'

"Then turning towards Mother Bigbone:

"'Haste! haste! fetch fresh water. He may perhaps die for this.'

"Whilst Mother Bigbone and I went to fill our pails at the pump, La Levrasse turning the lower cock of the box, the water gushed out in a stream.

"La Levrasse then took up one of the pails that I had brought, and emptied it into the large reservoir in two or three jerks.

"'Oh, it does me good!' said the voice, with an expression of utmost beatitude, and without the slightest foreign accent. 'It does me good.'

"A few more Latin words followed that exclamation.

"The poor carrier appeared to be quite grieved to have thus unintentionally endangered the valuable life of an Egyptian man-fish who spoke such good French.

"'When I think that I drove so long by the river's side!' cried the carrier with an expression of painful regret; 'and moreover, to say that, knowing I was conveying a man-fish, I should never once have thought of driving my cart into the water till it covered the lid of the box, and leaving it a good hour or so in the stream, to refresh and invigorate the worthy man—no, the worthy fish,—no, the worthy man-fish! What a simpleton I was!'

"Scarcely had the carrier uttered his tardy regrets before the inmate of the box appeared to shake and flounder about most violently, as if he were retrospectively alarmed at the hydraulic contrivance of his driver.

"'Dolt!' shrieked out La Levrasse in his turn, turning towards the unlucky carrier, 'you would have done a fine piece of work.'

"Then, leaning over the air-holes, he added:

"'Leonidas, my worthy, do you feel better now?'

"'Better—far better,' said this voice. 'But, the river,—oh! never, never! Tell the carrier so.'

"'This jolly fellow has been spoiled by frequenting the Nile,' said La Levrasse, very pompously; 'he can't bear any longer any river but that,—the aristocrat!' added he, turning towards the box.

"'Ah! Monsieur La Levrasse,' said the carrier, raising his head, 'what splendid receipts you will make on your road! In every town, in every village, my cart was followed by a train of people. 'Oh, what! a man-fish? a man-fish? that must be curious and funny!' said they all, as they read the label. 'Yes, my friends,' did I answer, 'I am driving him to M. La Levrasse, whom it belongs to; and, as he is coming this way with his troop, you will see the man-fish.'"

"La Levrasse interrupted the carrier.

"'Did you pass through Saint-Genêt?' said he to him.

"'Yes, master.'

"'And you remembered my message?'

"'I delivered your letter. Oh! master, it was enough to break one's heart. The wheelwright is the same as dying.'

"On hearing this speech my attention was instantly fixed; Bamboche had completed his confi-

dence, by telling me the name of the village where lived the poor wheelwright, the father of little Jeannette, the future Basquine of the troop.

"'So, it is then true, the wheelwright is very ill!' cried La Levrasse, unable to conceal his joy. 'His wife did not deceive me in her letter. Well! you saw her; what says she?'

"'Yes, she is also as bed-ridden as ever on her side. Oh! master, it is quite enough to break one's heart to see that father and that mother so ill, surrounded by their herd of ragged children starving with hunger.'

"'You hear! the carrier is dying,' repeated La Levrasse thoughtfully, looking at Mother Bigbone.

"'That shows you,' said she, 'that we must make haste and leave this place.'

"'Yes, yes, the sooner the better,' answered he.

"This resolution on his part, made me feel very glad. Bamboche would be so happy to learn that he should soon see Basquine! From that moment, my only thought was to find the means of getting at my campanion, to inform him of the happy tidings.

"La Levrasse, addressing the carrier, put some money into his hand, saying:

"'Come, there's your money; your horses have had time to rest. Go along.'

"'Oh, oh! I don n't mean to go off like that, till you have granted me two things, master,' said the carrier.

"'What things?'

"'First, master, I want to see your little Bamboche, that cunning, clever monkey; he is as sly and wicked as the devil; but he does so amuse me.'

"'Bamboche is in bed and asleep,' replied the juggler abruptly.

"'Well, so much the worse, master—so much the worse; the second thing is a *wetting*.*

"'I swore on my grand-mother's death-bed, never to give any wetting,' said La Levrasse with comical solemnity.

"'Wait a moment, master; the favour I have now to ask of you, is to let me have a little, little squint at the man-fish; I tried, as we came along, to see through the air-holes, but I could see nothing at all.'

"'When we come to the town of Apremont, I will give you a free place, the day before our last performance.'

"'But master——'

"'Come! do you want to trifle with me? When you return, you would tell every body that you had seen the man-fish, and as there are many scamps who are quite satisfied to see through other people's eyes, you would clip my receipts.'

"'Master, I give you my word that——'

"'Enough spoken on this score,' replied La Levrasse; 'have you told them in the places you came through, that I mean on my way to buy a new stock of heads of hair?'

"'Yes, yes,' said the carrier, stifling a sigh of disappointed curiosity. 'I told them you would gather your crop, my good reaper of hair, and you will be able to buy cheap, for this year bread is very dear.'

"'Very well, now go, and good luck to you,' said La Levrasse, pointing to the door, and looking at the man.

"'So, master, you won t then?'

"'Will you be off?' answered La Levrasse stamping with impatient fury.

"A few moments after, the ponderous doors of the yard were shut upon the carrier and his dray-cart, leaving behind, me, the juggler, and Mother Bigbone, in front of the mysterious box containing the man-fish.

"I confess, that in spite of my anxiety about Bamboche, and my eager desire to find him out, in order to tell him of the approaching meeting with Basquine, I felt a mixture of curiosity and terror at the strange personage on whom I was to attend, according to my master's orders, and render him the most assiduous services."

* A wetting, is a word used in London, by a quarter of a million of people, and signifies something *to drink*.

CHAPTER X.

THE MAN-FISH COMES OUT OF HIS BOX IN HIS NATURAL STATE.

"PROBABLY having heard the doors of the yard shut, the man-fish said, in a timid voice, through the perforations of his box:

"'May I come out, now?'

"'Wait!' said La Levrasse; 'that rascal, the carrier is so inquisitive, that he might get up in his cart to look over the door, or even peep through the key-hole. Mother Bigbone, go up stairs and see if he is gone about his business.'

"The herculean woman hastened to obey; vanished through a door, and soon appeared again at a window in the corn-loft, and said, as she looked after the cart, then rolling on—

"'There is no danger; Father Lefevre is down yonder, and is now turning the corner of the lane.'

"'Come, Leonidas, you may get out and air yourself,' said he to the *man-fish*, as he opened the box.

"At that moment my heart beat with fear and curiosity; I was at length about to contemplate the strange phenomenon.

"The lid of the box was raised.

"A man of small stature came out of it slowly and clumsily, as if his limbs were stiffened by long disuse. That which struck me instantly, was to see that the long sleeveless robe he had on *was quite dry;* I expected, on the contrary, to see him running down with water like a river, when I thought of the two or three pails of water poured by La Levrasse into the tunnel communicating with the box.

"Leonidas Shark, (that was his real name, and a truly ominous one it was) appeared to be about twenty-five; his features were irregular and ludicrous, and would have looked on paper, if faithfully drawn, like a rough sketch done by a beginner: thus, his right eye, with its lid constantly half dejected, owing to a natural infirmity, stood much higher than his left one, which was very open at all times. This gave him the most singular look which can be imagined. The point of his very long nose, instead of being perpendicular with its root, trenched a good deal on his left cheek, a serious disfigurement which made his mouth look ridiculous although it was pretty well in its right place, and strongly drawn out by a pair of thick lips, under which his chin abruptly escaped; his skull was very large, his hair thin, of a paleish chesnut hue, and not shiny; a few tufts of beard of the same colour had for several days been unshaven, and grew out through his ashy skin cruelly marked by the small-pox.

"His face, so ludicrously plain, was yet impressed with so much good-nature and shyness, that instead of feeling a wish to laugh at our new fellow boarder, I looked upon him with a degree of prepossession.

"'EGO ET ANIMAL SUM ET HOMO, NON TAMEN DUOS ESSE NOS DICES.'

"'*I am both a man and an animal, and yet you cannot say that I am two things.*'

"Such was the Latin quotation delivered by the man-fish Leonidas Shark, as he issued from his pretended pond.

"It is unnecessary to say that at that period of my life, I could not even distinguish the words ut-

tered by Leonidas; all I could hear was a murmur of unintelligible sounds; but at a later date, in the course of my adventurous career, having met Leonidas Shark again more than once, and always in some strange condition, we often recalled to memory the circumstances of our first meeting at La Levrasse's, and thus it was I learned the meaning of those words, borrowed from Seneca, the favourite author of the man-fish, who was fated, more than any body, to practise the stoical philosophy of his great master.

"I have found among some of my papers a fragment of a letter which Leonidas Shark wrote to me fifteen years after that time. In spite of the very low state of my affairs at that period, I had hoped to be able to obtain for my old companion a more suitable and happier situation.

"In that letter, which was intended for the eye of a third person, Leonidas disclosed with most candid sincerity the singular causes which had induced him to undertake and assume in public the character of a man-fish.

Here follows the fragment alluded to, which will exemplify, and perhaps cause you to esteem that person, who will re-appear several times in the course of this history.

CHAPTER XI.

FRAGMENT OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY LEONIDAS SHARK TO HIS FRIEND MARTIN, THE FOUNDLING.

"I WAS born to be a tailor; every thing serves to convince me that I should have made a good tailor. My ambitious father would not allow it; blessed be his memory, for his was indeed the best heart that could be found any where,—but his judgment, my dear Martin, was equally unsound.

"He was porter or gate-keeper at the house of M. Raymond, a schoolmaster on the Boulevard of Mount Parnassus, (to which I refer you for information). My uncle, a poor working tailor, who lived by doing jobs, dwelt near the house, and mended the old clothes for the school-boys; whenever I carried him any raiment to repair, and watched how skilfully he applied his needle, with his legs crossed under his hams upon his shop-board, in his little room, which was always nicely warmed in winter with a cast-iron stove, and in summer made airy by the fresh breeze of the Boulevard, I could not conceive a happier condition; the noise of his large steel scissors, with which he used to cut his broad pieces of fine glossy cloth, the sight of his skeins of every coloured silk would delight me; but

this admiration for my uncle was absolutely converted into veneration, and almost into superstition, when he restored to me, apparently in its maidenhood of all rent or tear, the breeches of a school-boy of the sixth class (more could not be said), and which I had brought to him in such a state before!

"I must likewise confess, that the sedentary state to which one is reduced by this fine profession, which so wonderfully regenerates old clothes, was very alluring to me; for, as I was poor and cowardly, I was never fond of an active life; and a secret presentiment likewise told me, that being morally timid, and physically ugly, my ugliness being at once ridiculous and stupid, with one eye perched up and the other perched down, and a nose leaning furiously over one side of my face, those disadvantages would do me no harm in my trade as a tailor, and would not qualify the trust and confidence of my customers.

"In spite of these happy dispositions of mind, my future lot was destroyed by my father's foolish vanity—*et fient et facta ista sunt* (such things ever have been and ever will be), according to the divine Seneca.

"It was the night of the distribution of the prizes: my father had seen a number of pupils pass by the lodge where he sat, with wreathlets of oak on their heads, and finely-bound books under their arms. He had been so excited, too, by the flourishes of the band on the nomination of each laureate, and had been so deeply impressed by the words of Monseigneur the Minister of public instruction, who had deigned to honour the occasion with his presence, and had proclaimed the young students THE FUTURE GLORY OF FRANCE, that the same night my father implored M. Raymond to take me in out of charity, and to give me the necessary instruction, to be enrolled in the seventh class the next year, in spite of my regrets and my eager looks unceasingly turned towards the small shop-board of my poor uncle the tailor. M. Raymond, who had some esteem for my father, put me under the care of a teacher, and my college education began.

"Unfortunately, on account of my queer-looking phiz, my shyness, and cowardice, not to speak of my low degree as the porter's son, I became, alas! I grieve to say it, in a few years, a good—an excellent—a wonderful scholar.

"Do not look upon this statement as a paradox, my dear Martin: abused, affronted, and laughed at—persecuted by all my schoolfellows, who had made me their butt, I struggled and strove hard to make great progress in order to gain some protection from the masters, and often tried to be the *first*, in order to be as widely removed as possible from the lower forms usually occupied by the *little rich boys*, my most inveterate tormentors, and who were called *Crabs* and *Jokers*.*

"Those persecutors, however, if I had possessed any pride, would very soon have brought me down from my empyrean height; for they made me fall upon my nose every day by putting their legs before me, and tripping me up, every time I began to rise to the first grade.

"One of the most miserable days in my life was the one on which, when in the sixth class, my name echoed for the first time beneath the tent erected in the middle of the court-yard, at the College of Louis-le-Grand, at the distribution of the prizes.

"'Leonidas Shark!' cried the censor, who called over the names of the laureates in a most stentorian voice.

"At this whimsical name there was a general roar of laughter, whilst the music played most vociferously the air, *Charmante Gabrielle*.

"I was sitting on my form with the other scholars of the establishment, when I heard my name called. I was seized with terror at the bare thought of crossing through that brilliant assembly, and then ascending a stage to the sound of music. Indeed, they might have cut me in pieces before they could have torn me from that bench.

"'Leonidas Shark!' repeated the censor in a voice still more reverberating.

"The laughing burst out again more loudly than before, accompanied by the strains of the band rising *crescendo*.

"I now completely lost my wits, and threw myself on all-fours under the bench. Just as the music suddenly broke off:

"'*Shark is down there—under the form!*' exclaimed, in his little, soft, piping voice, one of my schoolfellows—a true crab, as you may guess.

"On hearing this exclamation in the midst of the sudden silence, the spectators turned towards me; I heard a great bustle and confusion around me; some laughed, some were hissing, many called out '*Leonidas Shark*' in the most energetic tones of hilarity, and with the most ridiculous epithets. Two of my comrades pulled me by the feet; I fought like a lion, and uttered dreadful cries: the peals of laughter grew louder and louder; the thing was becoming a public scandal; when, to put an end to the uproar, the angry censor proclaimed me *absent*. The distribution continued; only the mention of my name, twice after, drew forth two temporary explosions, for I had carried off three prizes: two as first and one as second.

"All this is only ridiculous, my dear Martin, but what follows becomes terrible.

"When we returned home after the exhibition, M. Raymond, my schoolmaster, sent for me into his study, and after a most benevolent remonstrance on the subject of my insurmountable shyness, said to me:

"'Shark, you must become—you will become—the honour of my establishment; from this day forward I shall consider you no longer as my pupil, but as my son: I shall myself be your tutor, and you shall dine at my table.'

"My other father, Daddy Shark, who, on his return, had given me a sound thrashing—dear, good man!—to teach me never again to vex his paternal pride by such disasters, was near dying with joy on learning M. Raymond's goodness to me. I have already hinted to you, my dear Martin, that this goodness was full of treachery, *as almost every example of human kindness proves to be in the end*, and you shall judge of it yourself shortly.

"From the day that I became M. Raymond's favourite pupil, I was used as a bait, a sign-board, a living lure employed to draw customers to his institution by the noise of my surprising success, which, of course, was attributed to the excellent education imparted by M. Raymond to his scholars.

"Heretofore I had constantly shunned the playground, because, in spite of the watchful protection of the masters, the hours of recreation were in my case filled with every kind of tribulation. So I used to spend those hours in my father's lodge, an inviolate asylum, where, for lack of any thing else to do, I studied. But when once I had become M. Raymond's pupil, I not only continued to work during play-hours, but I worked on Sundays, on holidays, going to bed at midnight, and rising at five in the morning; there was no vacation for me: I worked without rest, and incessantly. In consequence of this continual straining of the mind, I was a continual prey to intolerable headachs, but I was afraid to acknowledge the pains I endured: I resisted them and went on toiling at the oar.

"In a word, that worthy M. Raymond used to put me, as it were, into a hot-house, in order to obtain from me by dint of forced labour, all the precocious fruits which my understanding could be-

* In French schools a *Cancre* or *Crab* means a teazing or plaguing school-boy who is too idle to learn any thing himself, and who vents his spite on the diligent student by all kinds of petty annoyances: the *farceur* or joker, is an idle boy too, but more funny than mischievous.

stow. The worthy man no doubt believed, that after a season or two, the plant would fade for want of strength, exhausted by a too hasty growth; but M. Raymond did not care, provided the effect was produced on the public: small and weak as I was, how did I manage to survive such outrageous toil, such constant and intolerable bodily sufferings, I do n't know; but I continued to flourish every summer, and to bend beneath the weight of my collegiate laurels.

"M. Raymond rejoiced; every returning year you read in the newspapers this triumphant puff: '*The pupil Leonidas Shark, who has just obtained three more prizes at the last Grand Examination, and five prizes at the College Louis-le-Grand, belongs to the famous Raymond Academy, on the Boulevard Mount Parnassus. We need not recommend that excellent school to the notice of fathers and mothers.*'

"You will readily believe, my dear Martin, that I had seldom time to reflect on what they meant to do with me; but, whenever I did so, it was to meditate with bitter regret on my uncle, the poor little tailor's shop-board; for what people used to call *my successes* were far from turning my head. I am not here falsely pretending to be modest; I had determined (and, until then, had obstinately kept my word), never again to face the triumph of a public *crowning*. At the distribution of prizes I was always proclaimed absent—thus renouncing the only reward which might have given me any fumes of pride.

"My successes, being thus despoiled of all illusion, and reduced to their simplest expression, were rewarded with blows, beatings, insults, mocking jests, and other testimonies of the jealous animadversion of my school-mates who, in spite of my protectors, always found means to reach me: and moreover, as my shyness, my awkwardness, my cowardice, and the consciousness of my ugly and ludicrous face, made me very mild and solitary, they imagined I was proud of my achievements, so that cuff and blow fell upon every small occasion.

"And yet, my dear Martin, it always set my own common sense in a good light, in spite of my twelve crowns, and whilst I knew that I was a good scholar, I really thought myself very dull; the idlest crab of all was a hundred times more witty in conversation—was more apt and clever than I was.

"The moment I left off my translations of Latin into French, or of French into Greek or Latin, a monotonous and barren exercise, and exactly similar to the idle and painful evolutions of a squirrel in a cage,—the moment I left off these useless and painful occupations which, when they are prolonged for seven or eight years, set to sleep, benumb, and frequently slaughter the lively, the penetrating, the inquisitive, the vivacious faculties of children and youth, I was really and truly a dull stupid fellow.

Two or three times, M. Raymond had the unfortunate idea of presenting me—me his phenomenon—to a small party of friends. I was besotted, incapable of taking part in any conversation whatever, unless on the subject of Greek and Latin authors, and of the greater or less fitness of the French language to express the sense faithfully; and even then I stammered: I could not succeed in making my thoughts clear and distinct. Beyond that, I became so complete an idiot, that M. Raymond was very soon disgusted with these exhibitions of my classic person.

"I was delighted with this exclusion, and if I had been one to be affected by such a reverse, I should have sought comfort for my silly shyness in these words of Seneca:—*Sed semel hunc vidimus in bello fortem, in foro timidum.* (The brave man on the field of battle has often been seen to tremble in the forum).

"How many instances, my dear Martin, I might quote of my dull and stupid ignorance of life. Stay! here is one among a thousand——

"I was much attached to my father; he went on a short visit into Normandy; I wanted to write to him. I made twenty rough drafts, more stupid, more absurdly ridiculous the one than the other. *I had been so long accustomed to live on the words, the sentences, and the thoughts of others, that I was obliged to give up all hopes of expressing my own sentiments with words and sentences belonging to me.*

"By a singular coincidence, the very day I had renounced the idea of writing to my father, I received a letter from one of the crabs at the school.

"In that missive, the crab gave me warning that in my recognised quality as a chicken-hearted and very forward scholar, I was supremely disagreeable to him; that I fretted his nerves most strangely;—in a word, that I worried him; and that for the future if I did not so contrive things as to be sometimes the last, *like every body else* (added the crab), I might, in spite of my protectors, expect to receive the best *hiding*, to enjoy the most plentiful shower of blows that ever lighted on the back of a *too good scholar*.

"I give you only the substance of the letter, my dear Martin, but it was spangled with wit and humour; never in my life could I have written such a letter.

"The crab concluded with proposing to me, if I had sufficient *pluck* not to misuse my position, *to toss up who should make the greatest number of barbarisms for the next prize essay*, 'the only means,' said the crab, 'to act on equal terms together.'

"This audacious and cynical contempt for the prize essay, the most sacred principle in the collegiate worship, seemed to me to be monstrous: this crab appeared to me like a blasphemer, a profaner of the temple; I dreamt that he was burnt at an *auto-da-fé*, upon a stake made up of all his *tasks*, and it looked like a mountain heap. I awoke, begging them to forgive him, and to leave him to his remorse—the wretch!

"But there are indomitable spirits. This crab was destined to surpass all his former delinquencies, by smoking aniseed in a pipe, and by giving (who can believe it?) a formidable kick in the belly to the censor, who had broken the said pipe in his teeth.

"The crab was turned out of the school with awful solemnity, and when I heard the dreadful maledictions, and alarming prognostications with which he was assailed on leaving the school-room, I really thought he was fated to the scaffold.

"Subsequently I have seen the name of the crab (you know the man, my dear Martin, since you were once his servant), I have seen his name flourish in red letters a foot long, on the panes of every *Cabinet de Lecture** or reading-room. He has become one of our most celebrated poets; whilst I, *cher miser* (miserable man), in whom his Excellency Monseigneur the Minister of Public Instruction saw one of the future glories of France, I saw myself afterwards obliged to abdicate my dignity to turn *man-fish*.

"But truly, when once I had escaped the thraldom of the school, I have, by the practice of real life, learnt to express my thoughts like another, and am able, my dear Martin, to write you this letter,—a thing which would have been morally impossible in the days of my grandest collegiate triumphs.

"A few words more before we come to our first meeting, fifteen years ago, at the house of that abominable mountebank called La Levrasse, where I

* The *Cabinet de Lecture*, or reading-room, is a very common place of resort in Paris, Lyons, Bordeaux, Brussels, and all the great towns in France and Belgium. You go into a very comfortable room, furnished with an abundant supply of newspapers, periodicals, and books, and may stay as long as you please on paying *twopence* for general reading, or one *halfpenny* for each separate paper. Eating and drinking are not connected with these reading-rooms, which are an entirely distinct branch of trade. The *Cabinets de Lecture* are more numerous in Paris than coffee-houses are in London. The first man of spirit who opens two or three of these reading-rooms in London will render a great service to his country, and reap a fine harvest for himself.—*Translator's note.*

found you as yet quite a child. With this fragment you will have my whole life before you."

CHAPTER XII.

THE LETTER OF LEONIDAS SHARK CONTINUED.

"I HAVE already told you, my dear Martin, that M. Raymond plumed himself upon my proficiency, and made his profit by it: scholars poured into his academy; my persevering success had a small share in that affluence; but M. Raymond's prosperity was clouded with some fretful cares.

I was then finishing my course of rhetoric. Since the fatal day when I had hidden myself on all-fours under the bench, to escape being crowned, never had my father, nor my teachers, nor M. Raymond, nor even the provisor, been able to subdue my obstinate resolution in regard to a public oration, with the accompanying honours of the band of music and the ministerial, episcopal, municipal, and other embraces.

"On one side, my obstinate shyness was satisfactory to M. Raymond; for if, by my success, I was the most illustrious representative of his house, I should have been, physically speaking, the most pitiful and ludicrous specimen in his academy, and under every circumstance ridicule is always dangerous.

"M. Raymond, a skilful man, knew it well; and this was the rose-leaf which prevented that worthy Sybarite to rest altogether at ease on my laurels; had it been possible to exhibit in my place on the stage of the Sorbonne some nimble crab, rich and spruce, and pretty as they are almost all of them—the rogues!—M. Raymond's triumph would have been perfect. But it would have been too serious a step that substitution of persons, and not to be thought of.

"In the meanwhile, and at the end of the school term, my poor father fell into a decline. I don't know why or how it was he conceived the deplorable idea of beseeching me to let him enjoy the sight of my approaching triumph, for it was no longer doubtful; with me, long since, to compose was to win the prize, and the one now to be competed for was *the prize of honour*.

"According to my father, the feelings he should have on seeing me *walk in my glory*, would certainly bring on a happy revolution in the disease with which he was afflicted; that idea, however unreasonable it may seem, soon became a settled one in his mind—a monomania. On my refusal, he wept in so heart-rending a manner, and he looked so happy, so relieved at the faintest ray of hope I would sometimes give him, when overcome by his affliction, that in spite of my terror at a public oration, I resigned myself to the trial, and gave a promise.

"On hearing this promise, my father leapt from his bed, from which he had not stirred for two months, exclaiming—

"'You restore me to life, Leonidas.

"At the time of composing my essay, a monstrous thought occurred to me. I remembered the crab's sacrilegious proposal—to compete for barbarisms: yes, Martin; for a moment I meditated to write a Latin discourse so wretched, that I should have lost all chance of success; by that means I might have escaped the dreaded oration; but I drew back from so cowardly an action.

"The fatal day arrived: *omnia patienter forenda* (we must bear all things patiently), said I, putting on my father's only coat, his blue coat for high days and holidays. (My poor uncle, the tailor, was dead; otherwise, what a coat he would have cut me out of his finest Elbeuf cloth!) This coat was too small for me, and the sleeves hardly reached down to my wrists, so that it made my hands appear twice as big and red as they were. I wore round my neck a cravat embroidered at the corners; a striped waistcoat of dubious colour, made out of an old petticoat of my late mother's; a narrow pair of pale nankeen trousers, which only reached to my ankles; black worsted stockings, and a pair of shoes such as none but a *fag* at college ever wears, and compared to which a carter's shoes would be pumps. Now imagine, above all this strange accoutrement—the timid wild aspect that you know I have, my dear Martin, and then behold me, accompanied by M. Raymond and my father, who said he felt himself a boy again, getting into a coach to go to my doom,—that is, to the Sorbonne, where the prizes of the *grand concours* are distributed.

"I have a right to have been, and still to be, a coward all my life; for I showed, on that day the courage of a hero.

"'Leonidas,' said my father to me, squeezing my hand when I left him to go and take my seat on the benches set apart for the scholars: 'Leonidas, you won't be afraid?'

"'No more than my namesake at Thermopylæ, my father,' answered I, proudly.

"And then I strode over the bench.

"My father did not understand the allusion, but my countenance satisfied him, and banished his fears.

"The chief prize of honour was decreed to a young man named Adrian Borel, of the College Charlemagne. I am positive I should have won it, that principal prize, had it not been for the fatal promise given to my father, which I was always thinking about; the second prize of honour was adjudicated to me, and, after the usual forms, the fatal voice exclaimed:

"'Leonidas Shark!'

"Then the band struck up the march of Fernando Cortez for my onset.

"A dumb murmur of curiosity greeted my name; great news is always transmitted with marvellous rapidity; they already knew (how did they know it?) that the famous student of the Raymond School, who, yielding to an extravagant degree of reserve, had hitherto fled from these flattering distinctions, was at length going to submit to be publicly crowned.

"At the first sound of my name, accompanied by a terrific flourish of instruments, a mist passed over my eyes; I felt a frightful buzzing in my ears, but I whispered to myself: 'My father is looking on; cheer up, and don't flinch.'

"Thereupon, I arose and walked valiantly to the left side—it was to the right I should have gone. A compassionate hand turned me quite round, and somebody said to me: 'Now go straight on.'

"I followed the course of the benches.

"'Now, to the left!' cried the same sympathising spirit.

"I turned to the left, and found myself in the spacious arena which divided the hall into two parts, and led up to a stage. I went towards that end, with my eyes steadfastly fixed on it, without looking to the right or to the left, or at my feet, as if I were walking on a plank thrown over an abyss. I had selected, as my guiding star, the splendid long robe of his Excellency Monseigneur the Grand Master of the University.

"Directed by that kind of polar star, I at length reached the lower steps of the stage; but I climbed them so hurriedly, or rather so awkwardly, that entangling my feet in the carpets, I stumbled down in the middle of the steps: my wild aspect, my ludicrous attire, the singular combination of the name I answered to, had already inclined the audience to merriment; my fall became the signal of a universal explosion of laughter.

"I behaved like a hero: for reflecting on the agony that this ridiculous incident must occasion my father, I got bravely on my feet again in the

midst of the uproar; at last I reached the top of the stage, and threw myself hap-hazard into the arms of the Grand Master, who, far from expecting the abrupt embrace, was preparing to place upon my brow the laureate crown. He succeeded, however, although rather confused by my ill-timed and convulsive strain—but how unfortunate! the wreath, being too large, fell down over my eyes, and hid them almost entirely under its thick foliage. Instead of ridding myself of my crown, I lost my wits completely; I put out my hands mechanically to grope my way, and the rest of the oration looked like a game of blind-man's buff. Cries of '*take care, you 'll break your neck*,' resounded amidst tempestuous roars of laughter, which broke out again and again; at last I had the *good fortune*, in the midst of my bewildered circumvolutions, to fall with such violence, head foremost, from the top to the bottom of the steps, that I was stunned by the blow.

"This was indeed a *lucky* fall for me, my dear Martin, for the rather serious conclusion of that burlesque scene drew pity on me; my senses returned soon after, but I had presence of mind enough to feign insensibility, and allowed myself to be carried out of the hall, my face smeared with the blood issuing from a very slight wound; and as I was carried along I overheard many expressions of pity and concern.

"'Poor fellow!' said one, 'for a prize of honour, he looked as dull and stupid as a goose; but I am sorry he should fall and hurt himself.'

"'As for me,' said another, 'I regret the game of blind-man's buff did not last longer; I thought at one time he would have taken hold of the bishop's head.'

"'Ah! ah! true, true!' cried a third, 'I shan't forget it in a hurry.'

"These, and such-like affecting proofs of solicitude, continued to follow me till I was carried out of the hall.

* * * * * *

"A week after this last *triumph*, I lost my poor father; the grief he felt at seeing me so derided and railed at, then the fright he took on seeing me afterwards brought home covered with blood, occasioned such a relapse in his complaint, that in a few days after he sunk under it.

"M. Raymond, like a skilful man, had sold his establishment the moment it had risen to that height of favour whence it could but decline. Whilst I was present at the last agony and death of my poor father, M. Raymond, after having installed his successor in his place, had set out for Touraine, where he intended for the future to rest himself after his labours: all I received from him was a note in which he told me that, being unwilling to disturb the painful duties which detained me with my father, he regretted the necessity of leaving without seeing me, but that he had recommended me particularly to his successor.

"The sum total of which signifies that I was no longer of any use to M. Raymond, and he was glad to get rid of *his adopted son*. And the world is full of these instances, *so long as the patron who takes you under his wing hopes to gain largely by his charity, you may depend upon his benevolence; but the moment you cease to serve his purpose, you must expect to lose his protection.*

"My business with his successor was very simple and transitory; he was a cold, phlegmatic man, extremely polite, but, as it seemed to me, an enemy to illusory hopes and false expectations, and always ready to come straight to the point.

"This is almost verbatim what he said to me:

"'My dear Mr. Shark, you were the best scholar in the Raymond Academy; your brilliant course of study is at an end; your father's death leaves you absolutely your own master. However, if you do not wish to leave at once this house, of which you have been the honour and glory, I shall be happy to mark my esteem for one of the most shining scholars of the University, by offering you a place in the dormitory and at the refreshment table *for the next fortnight*. After which, my dear Mr. Shark, believe me that my good wishes will go along with you, whatever career you may think proper to run.'

"On hearing the words *whatever career*, &c., I stood confounded, stunned with consternation, and petrified.

"What career could I run? I had never in my life thought of it, and M. Raymond, whilst making his profit out of my present existence, had altogether neglected to think of the future. What was I good for? What was I fit to do? with my bundle of thirty withered crowns, and my hundred and fifty volumes of prizes magnificently bound, and my parts and qualifications as an excellent scholar? *Then it was I felt how right I had been to think myself a fool in spite of my successes; and I regretted more bitterly than ever the shop-board of my poor uncle the tailor.*

"M. Raymond's successor guessed the cause of my embarrassment, and said to me:

"'My dear Mr. Shark, after your brilliant course of study, you ought necessarily, with a view to render them profitable, to take your degree as graduate, and then attend a course of lectures at the public institutions, to prepare you to enrol yourself as a physician, a lawyer, a notary, an attorney, or a professor; but to enable you to attend these courses, you require the means of living, and paying your fees. Now have you the means of living? Are you able to pay the fees?'

"'I have got nothing in the world but my crowns, my books, and my father's furniture,—that is a table, a chest of drawers, a bed, and a couple of chairs.'

"'That is not sufficient,' replied M. Raymond's successor, with a cold dignified look; 'I would have offered you the alternative of acting as tutor to some of the pupils; but a professor who has been the playmate of almost every one in the school, cannot have the requisite authority to control them, especially when his native bashfulness, and—allow me to add—when his appearance—is unfortunately not calculated to command that respect, without which there is no possible subordination.'

"'I have no means of studying to prepare myself for the bar, or the medical profession, that is true,' cried I, more and more bewildered; 'my pupils, if I had any, would laugh in my face, and no wonder; I should never have the resolution and firmness required to overawe them; but then what would you have me do?'

"'That is a question which I cannot answer, dear Mr. Shark; I have not solved the problem of your future life: I have only laid it open to yourself; its future solution is your own concern, and, as I had the honour to tell you at the beginning of our colloquy, my best wishes will attend you whatever the career may be you shall run.'

"'But, sir, since all those that I might enter upon are closed against me, owing to my poverty, where was the use of giving me this fine education? What will become of me?'

"'I have already had the honour to observe to you, dear Mr. Shark, that I only set the problem of your future life before you without attempting to solve it; to do that is your business. And now, believe me, my best wishes,' &c., &c., &c.

"the cunning fellow had but this one string to his fiddle; I could get nothing else from him.

"During the fortnight's *grace* so benevolently granted to me by M. Raymond's successor, I remained completely inactive, dejected, and stupified; incapable of taking any resolution, for this capital reason, that I saw none to take. Like other people who want the energy to take a decisive part whilst they are conscious that a catastrophe is at hand, I comforted myself by saying that, no doubt, M. Raymond's successor would grant me a fortnight longer, then

another fortnight, and so on. I must frankly confess that if he had, at the end of two or three months, I should still have been just where I was. Now, that worthy man being full of sound sense and penetration, no doubt came to that conclusion; for, on the fifteenth day, as the clock was striking twelve, he came into the empty school-room where I was accustomed to stay (the boarders were all gone home for the vacation), and holding out his hand to me in a manner at once formal and friendly, he said to me:

"'I am come to bid you farewell, dear Mr. Shark, —my very dear Mr. Shark.'

"I felt that there was no adjournment to be hoped for, and answered with a sigh of resignation:

"Well, sir, I am ready to leave. I only beg of you to wait till I fetch a carrier to remove my poor father's furniture, my prize-books, and my wreaths.'

"'Have you taken a lodging, then?'

"'No, sir.'

"'Where do you mean to take your furniture and your books?'

"'I do n't know.'

"'You really interest me exceedingly,' said M. Raymond's successor, 'and although I make it a rule never to advise any one, for it is too serious a responsibility, this is what I propose to you: your prize-books and crowns would, as the honourable testimonials of your success, be admirably placed in the school library: dispose of them to me. I will also contrive to use your father's furniture: it will do for the porter who shall take his place; and, if you believe me, you had better take a ready-furnished lodging; it is more convenient for a young man like you. I will give you five francs a-piece for your books, which is more than you would get at a book-shop; and an appraiser shall make a valuation of the furniture: I will first deduct the charges for your father's funeral, for which here is the bill already receipted, and the balance you shall have to dispose of.'

"Two hours later, I left M. Raymond's successor's house with a bundle under my arm, and 720 francs in my pocket. This small sum was not quite the amount of my prize-book; so that my poor father, after a long life of humble toil, had not left enough to bury him.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION OF MR. LEONIDAS SHARK'S LETTER TO MARTIN.

"ONE of the most serious defects and ill-consequences of the education I had received like so many other men, was my utter ignorance of practical life, or the world as it is, in that condition unfortunately so frequent, *a man entirely dependant on his own resources, which resources consisted of his knowledge as a shining scholar.*

"I said, with the divine Seneca: *Bonis externis non confidendum.* (Never trust to outward advantages.) That was a saying easily applied; I had no property; they had taught me never to let myself be softened by riches. That would have been well enough, if they had first taught me how to acquire some.

"My 720 francs once consumed, I was conscious that I had no means of gaining a bare livelihood. Weak of body, and accustomed to a certain mental labour quite mechanical, nobody could have been less fit than I was for the employment of a street-porter, which would have been my only expedient, if I had met with any thing to carry, and had been strong enough to do the duty.

"It must likewise be told: one of the consequences of such an education is to render him who has received it incapable of manual labour, partly because his silly pride revolts at it; partly because his physical debility prevents him, and again because such a thought *as to work with his hands* can never even occur to his mind, so far removed is it from the sphere in which the sedentary student has been used to live.

"You will readily imagine, my dear Martin, that I was not conspicuous for my knowledge of the *world.* I had never roved beyond my father's box, or M. Raymond's school-room, save when I went to the college; and during my progress to and fro between the school and Louis-le-Grand, I hardly ever looked about me, continually taken up with my lessons of the previous day, or the day following, and but little regardful of the occurrences in the street. Being thus as much a stranger to the life and manners of Paris as a downright country boor, judge what must have been my embarrassment, when I found myself alone in the *Quartier Latin,* driven to look out for lodging and to provide for all my wants.

"A kind-hearted grocer, whom I applied to, informed me of a small ready-furnished hotel in the Rue de la Harpe, where I took up my quarters. Not knowing where to hide my treasure, my 720 francs, to prevent their being stolen, I hit upon the lucky thought of depositing them in the landlord's hands; and he readily undertook the charge.

"Touched by this act of condescension on his part, I felt myself immediately disposed to put unlimited confidence in him, and I asked him where he thought I might meet with employment.

"His first question (I have often heard it since) was this: '*What can you do? What are you fit for?*'

"I replied: 'I gained the second prize of honour, and I am a good Greek and Latin scholar.'

"'Then teach Greek and Latin,' answered the landlord, very sensibly.

"'To whom?'

"'My worthy youth, I do n't know; *look about.* My business is to attend to the house, and not to look out for pupils.'

"*Look about!* how easy to say: but look where? Could I look about, or find any thing, utterly ignorant as I was of the world and men's ways? The advice was very much like a bad joke; I could not offer my services to the first person I met.

"Nevertheless I did make some attempts to find employment, and among others I applied to two students, my fellow-lodgers: one of them gave me his word of honour 'that he would entrust me to teach Greek to the first male child he should have by his *etudiante;*'* the other replied, 'that with regard to the dead languages, he set no value on any save the *Savate* and the *Culatage des pipes.*'

"Ashamed and timorous, I had no courage to expose myself to any more jokes or fresh disappointments, and I sunk back into another fit of apathy, similar to the one I had dozed away my time in during the fortnight's *grace* allowed to me by M. Raymond's soft-spoken successor.

"I had thought the fortnight would never end. I likewise believed in the everlasting duration of my 720 francs: an illusion which was unfortunately kept up by the care I had taken to request my landlord to pay himself for my board and lodging out of the sum he held in his hands. Such ingenuousness, rare in the *Quartier Latin,* so much affected the good man, that he gave me the best cheer *at my own risk and peril.*

"Time went on. I seldom left the house; immersed in a state of rigid inertness, I had but one aim: to avert my eyes from the future lot which threatened me, when my little treasure should be exhausted; frequently, too, I deceived myself with vain and foolish hopes.

* The *grisette* who lives with a student as his mistress, a universal practice in Paris, is called an *etudiante,* from *etudiant,* a student.

"'It is impossible,' I used to say, 'that a second prize of honour man, who has won upwards of thirty laurel crowns should die of hunger. How am I to get out of this quandary which fate has thrown me into? I don't know; but a secret presentiment tells me I shall get out.'

"Sometimes, however, I endeavoured to divest myself of this apathetic dejection; I called my best classical maxims to my assistance.

"'*Vana optari, vana timere remedium à philosophia petendum,*' said I, with Seneca. (Philosophy alone can afford a remedy to our vain fears and desires.) And then I would rake up all the philosophy I was master of.

"'*Despise riches.*'

"'*Be patient under suffering.*'

"I had no occasion to despise riches; but I was patient under suffering, according to the maxim. But for all that, the practical solution of the question of my future lot did not make any progress.

"One day the landlord came into my room, radiant with joy.

"'I have got you a pupil,' said he to me; 'you are to receive thirty francs a month—one franc per lesson; he is a worthy young man, who has been badly educated, and who wishes to be read up to enable him to take out his degree as a graduate.'

"I thought myself saved, in spite of some irksome misgivings on the score of my moral and physical authority, for I well knew how little I was calculated to inspire awe; yet, left alone with my pupil, I relied upon my hopes of mastering my bashfulness.

"The pupil was presented to me: he was as shy, as ugly, and almost as ludicrous as myself; he appeared to me the best creature in the world, and immediately testified towards me the most respectful deference. I thought myself saved, and gave him his first lesson.

"There I met with a fearful obstacle which I had never even expected. Now, for the first time, I understood that a man might possess real erudition, know a great deal, and yet be altogether unfit to teach others: I had the greatest difficulty in turning my thoughts into words; the least objection disconcerted me, and I felt that to make my lessons profitable, I must translate aloud and at sight, intersperse my translations with remarks, to show off a fine thought, or point out a happy expression, criticise my pupil's faults, and then tell him in what they consisted; alas! that easiness in labour, that kind of oratorical readiness, had never been mine; I had been what is called a persevering *fag* or *pioneer*, a term which is hardly strong enough to express how painful, slow, and heavy, was my own method of learning.

"Still I did not despair; I thought I should accustom myself to the task—that in my following lessons I should gain more confidence. But I was deceived; and as, after all, I was an honest man, I frankly confessed to my pupil at the end of the first week, that to attempt to teach him any longer would be to steal his money.

"'Why truly,' answered he with simplicity, 'I perceive that I have made no progress since the first lesson.'

"After which he gave me eight francs for my eight lessons, and we parted with mutual esteem for each other.

"This last blow was a crushing—a decisive one: it showed me the annihilation of the only resource I could have drawn from my education; I fell back into my apathetic inertness, repeating my favourite proverb: *omnia patienter forenda* (bear all things patiently.)

"Four months passed away in this manner; one morning the landlord came into my chamber.

"'We have now but twenty francs remaining, including the next fortnight's board, Mr. Shark,' said he to me; 'I therefore come to warn you of it, not because I feel uneasy, God forbid! since you owe me nothing,—on the contrary: but I wish to inform you of the state of matters.'

"I was absolutely stunned.

"With seven hundred and twenty francs I had fully expected to live one year—two years—for ever!—I don't know how long. The landlord, suspecting that my stupor was caused by suspicions injurious to his honour, returned a few minutes after with a long-tailed bill, in which were set down in detail my daily meals, day by day, too delicate repasts most unfortunately for my purse, and which I had eaten with the utmost indifference and mental abstraction.

"The worthy landlord said to me with offended dignity as he delivered me the bill and the balance:

"'There are your twenty francs, Mr. Shark; I am not used to be suspected; you have still eleven days more to stay in my house, since you have paid me beforehand; but, after that, I should as lieve take another lodger.'

"On going out, he left the twenty francs upon the drawers.

"The fatal circle which hemmed me in kept shrinking more and more, and still my faculties were paralysed by the same ruthless want of aptitude.

"I spent my last penny the day before the expiration of my term; I had now to pay him for another fortnight in advance or leave his hotel. I left, therefore.

"For a long time before I had observed the most philosophical disregard as to my dress, which was falling to pieces: my shoes were full of holes, my hat had lost all manner of shape; since yesterday, I had felt the internal gripings of a wolfish appetite, and yet I did not know where I should sleep that night, as I had not a farthing in my pocket.

"Walking on without any object, I came through the Rue Dauphine to the Pont Neuf, and roamed along the quays, repeating to myself in despair all the maxims of philosophy I had gleaned at school; several of these, which had formerly won my attention, now returned to my memory with a feeling of sickening grief that none can conceive who has not felt the curse of destitution; they were all of practical appliance, and very apposite to my desperate condition.

"'*Nam ut quandoque moriaris, etiam invito positum est; ut quum voles, in tuâ manu est—quid in mora est? Nemo te tenet; evade, quâ visum est! Elige quam libet rerum naturæ partem! Quam tibi præbere exitum jubeas! Hæc nempe sunt et elementa, quibus hic mundus administratur, aqua, terra, spiritus! Omnia ista, tam causæ vivendi sunt, quam viæ mortis,*' &c. (To die some day without your will, such is your obligation; to die whenever you will yourself, such is your right. Why then delay? Nobody prevents you. Escape by what issue you please; nature holds out to you for the purpose all her elements. The three fundamental bases of the constitution of all created things—water, air, and earth, are at once the sources of life and the instruments of dissolution, &c.

"This convenient and open doctrine of suicide had never struck me so forcibly, on account of its wisdom, as at that moment. I looked down on the running river at my left; it was calm and clear, and reflected the sun most pleasantly. This was tempting. Nevertheless, I continued my way towards the Champs Elysées.*

"Soon after I heard a church bell tolling in the distance; I had never been very devout, but that melancholy sound, recalling to my mind what I knew of Christian principles showed me how feeble they were, in the present posture of my affairs, to bear me up.

* A magnificent walk leading from the Palace of the Tuileries to the Avenue de Neuilly, and part of the royal road to Neuilly and St. Cloud.

"Those principles, like the moral philosophy of the sages of antiquity, taught the contempt of riches, resignation, the hope of a better life, recommended and extolled, it is true, a common brotherhood among men, and said to them, 'Love one another, be like brothers!' Alas! all I desired was to be looked upon and loved by somebody as a brother, one who would have said to me: 'You have no home? See—here is one. You are hungry? there—eat.' But where was I to find that brother in the Lord? Charity depends on him who can practise it, and not on him who solicits for it; it reminds one of the famous maxim: '*Catch your hare before you cook it.*'

"In that respect, at least, the doctrine of suicide appeared to me the wiser; it was directly practicable, easy, and within every man's reach; it was not one of those principles the realisation of which entirely depends on the good-will or charity of another party; your freedom depends solely and absolutely on yourself; it was but a single moment to go through—and then—a new life. And, faith! whatever it might be, it could hardly be more wretched than the one I wanted to relinquish. I was, therefore, morally convinced; but yet, I still went forward. Having on my left my dear little Seine quite ready, always ready—there beside me, at my disposal, I felt a sort of calm, interrupted only now and then by the heat and faintness of a tiger's hunger.

"Thus advancing, I had reached the Champs Elysees, when the noise of clarions and cymbals drew forth my attention; I turned my head towards the sound, and perceived several jugglers' booths erected in the open air.

"On the platform raised in front of one of these booths, a merry-andrew and his master were parading themselves, inviting the crowd to walk inside; above the cloth curtain was a picture of a giant, opening a huge mouth, into which two men, armed with forks as large as pitchforks, were throwing a heap of roast turkeys sausages, and pies.

"Beneath the picture you read in large letters:

"'THE LIVING OGRE.

"'*He devours in presence of the respectable company ten pounds of meat, a pie weighing five pounds, a Dutch cheese, and a six pound loaf!*'

"Public curiosity was greatly excited; the crowd gathered about the show, in which they announced the exhibition of the ogre; whilst the other two booths were deserted, and the rival mountebanks viewed with a mournful, jealous eye the good fortune of their lucky neighbour, the ogre.

"'What a fine business! how easy, too—convenient and nutritive—is the trade of yon ogre!' said I, with a gloomy smile. 'There 's a man born under a lucky star! Ah! I wish the College prizes only led to so safe a prospect.'

"Then I passed on, leaving behind me the showmen, the living ogre, and the sounds of the distant horn which drew from me the one reflection more, mingled with melancholy pride:

"'And I too have been saluted with these flourishes!'

"Night came on—a soft, gentle night, in spite of the winter season; the walks grew more and more deserted; I was soon left alone; and meditating my ancient theory of suicide, I had strayed to the shelving side of the river, which at that spot was rather precipitous.

"All at once the strains of hunger became horribly acute; a kind of vertigo seized upon me; I determined to have done with life: I turned my back to the stream, and let myself go.

The cold sensation of the water no doubt roused the instinct of self-preservation within me. I struggled; to my great astonishment, I perceived that instead of sinking, I was kept up on a level with the water by some unseen object; but, on making another move, I got my head under, and felt, in spite of my desperate efforts, entangled within the meshes of a large net. At the same time I swallowed two or three mouthfuls of water which choked me, and I fainted away.

"What then took place, I do n't know: whether the stream had carried off the net, torn by my fall from its fastenings, or whether my violent efforts, without my being conscious of it, had pushed me towards the bank: when I recovered my senses, the moon was shining vividly, and I found myself lying at my ease on the grassy edge of the river. My body was out of the water, my legs were still in it; but I was as completely locked within the meshes of the net as ever Gulliver was. As I strove to loose myself from my bonds, I felt frisking about me several moist, slippery bodies, which I discovered to be very fine fishes, when I was completely restored to my senses.

"A quarter of an hour after, I was sitting on the strand, soaking with water; but free from the net, and smiling at the prodigious struggles of a dozen carps and barbels stretched upon the grass by my side.

"I will not conceal from you, my dear Martin, that my first thought was one of joy to have escaped death, and the second impression that was made upon me reminded me that I belonged to the carnivorous race of man; for I felt a most voracious appetite. It is brutal—it is even animal—to say so, but it is nevertheless true. Therefore, when I perceived, by the light of that lovely moon, the shining silvery belly of one of the little barbels, I snatched it up. And, oh, horror! first I stunned it by striking its head against the earth, and then, whilst still palpitating, I devoured it. Well, that flesh, so fresh and soft, was not distasteful to me; and then a fine carp took its turn. When I fell upon the next, as that was the third fish, my appetite was in some degree dulled: so I selected my bits more daintily—with the nice distinguishment of a fine feeder.

"That fish meal restored my spirits; but still I was cold: so seeing a bright ray of light on the strand, I shook myself up, and carrying off in a piece of the net the rest of my fish, I bent my steps towards the spot. It proved to be some sailors who, having to start the next morning at day-break, were boiling some pitch, and rubbing the sides of their boat with it.

"With a new-found faculty of invention, the power of which was astonishing to myself, and of which I had never given any proofs in my French or Latin exercises, I pretended to be a passionate admirer of fishing, and protested that on raising my nets, I had fallen head foremost into the water: my dripping clothes, and the fish I carried, sufficiently testified to the truth of my story.

"These worthy sailors gave me a hearty welcome, invited me to dry myself at their fire; and, if I liked to do so, to stretch myself till the dawn upon a mattress in their cabin. They even carried their hospitality so far as to offer me the use of a gourd filled with brandy. I accepted their mattress, gave one or two squeezes to the gourd, and, after well drying myself at the fire, I lay down to sleep, with a brain tolerably excited by the brandy, and the strange series of incidents of that eventful day.

"I do n't know how it happened that the recollection of the ogre in the booth recurred to my memory; but in the state of mental excitement I then was, that remembrance suggested to me an idea equally comic, ironical, and serious.

"'Why should I fear for the future?' said I; 'I have found a trade, and an excellent one to boot. Those showmen exhibit an ogre, whose talent—a very middling talent surely—consists, after all, in

gulping down a prodigious mass of nutriment. What is it, but a hungry man on a larger scale? That 's all. There is no novelty in it; nay more,—it is repugnant to see such a gladiator, such a blackguard, indulging his revolting voracity. Would it not be far more novel and curious, and in better taste, to show the world a youth familiar with the writings of the ancients, a second prize man from college, one who has received thirty laurel crowns, practising, by way of a diverting contrast, the interesting pastime of eating live fishes?

"So then, why should I not go to-morrow, and offer my services to one of those two showmen, whose booths the crowd deserted yesterday, to push, and press, and jostle one another, as they poured in to see that insipid ogre—that gormandising schemer?

"'Your neighbour exhibits an ogre,' will I say to the showman, 'he seduces the public from you; bring back that inconstant, that butterfly public, by showing them, not a mere ogre, but a phenomenon that lives upon raw fish. More than that!' exclaimed I, as I felt my fancy take fire and glow, and my original idea gaining strength, and assuming a complete shape by successive and ingenious improvements; 'yes, better than that—*show them* A MAN-FISH, who lives in the water, and who, instead of arms, is gifted with fins. Conceive the effect, gentlemen! what a sight to oppose to your vain rival, a man with fins instead of arms, plunged in a huge tub or bath, and devouring all sorts of fish in a live state. Really, gentlemen, this would be a spectacle, and, in theatrical language, *this would draw*; for what is a poor, pitiful ogre, compared with a *man-fish?*'

"I fell asleep in the midst of these whimsical conceptions; and at day-break the sailors awoke me. After taking leave of those poor, worthy fellows, the first examples of good humanity I had ever met, the first instance of men who had not used me as an instrument of profit, I went along with my fish. My thoughts of the previous night, in respect to the project of competing with the ogre, far from vanishing with the night, appeared to me perfectly rational, sound, and practicable. For now that I had undertaken not to serve, but to deceive mankind, as they always judge by contraries, I was certain of success.

"Overcoming my natural shyness, I walked towards the itinerant vehicles which served the mountebanks as dwelling-houses after their daily exhibitions.

"Conceive my joy, imagine my ecstasy. After a long conversation with father Boulingrin, a wrestler by profession, and likewise a boxing-master, I saw him adopt my project with eagerness.

"When he had seen me eat a carp and a small

barbel, raw and lively, the estimable juggler proposed to me these splendid conditions: '*Twenty-five sous a day. Board and lodging. To be found in fins.*'

"A week after this engagement, during which Father Boulingrin had my new fins made most artistically, a magnificent picture was displayed outside our booth, in which I was represented with my body half protruding from a large pond, with my fins displayed, and holding between my teeth a fantastic sort of fish. At the foot of the picture you read the following advertisement:

"'THE MAN-FISH, *a living and supernatural phenomenon, caught by the Mamelukes of the Pasha of Egypt in the great river Nile, situated in the land of the Pharaohs and the Pyramids. This wonderful phenomenon cannot exist out of water: he lives on nothing but living fish; he has fins instead of arms at his sides, which none are suffered to touch except the ladies and military men.*'

"It is due to Father Boulingrin to acknowledge, as I do in all humility, that this reserve in favour of the fair sex and the glory of the country, was suggested by himself.

"'*This incredible phenomenon can reply in four different languages to any questions the respectable company may put to him in Latin, in Greek, in French, and in Egptian.*'

"It had been agreed upon between my master and me, in case any of the respectable company should address me in Egyptian, that I should answer in a dialect invented by myself, by which means my impudent interlocutor would be strongly suspected, and soon convicted, of not being able to speak the real and genuine language of the Nile.

"The effect was prodigious: the ogre was cruelly deserted for the *man-fish*, and our first receipts reached the enormous figure of *thirty-three francs*.

"Since that time I have found the life and condition of a man-fish very tolerable; I have travelled as such with Father Boulingrin in all his peregrinations, until he gave up his wandering life for a career less hazardous: he offered to contract an engagement for me with La Levrasse, on the same terms as I had with him; I accepted his offer, and it was on entering the service of my new master that I saw you, for the first time, my dear Martin; you were then quite a child.

"Since that period you know the story of my life; now thanks to these particulars which I send you to-day, you have before you the whole of my career."

* * * * * *

"Such were the prior events of Leonidas Shark, the man-fish, who had arrived to strengthen the composition of the troop of the mountebank La Levrasse."

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE MOUNTEBANK, HIS PARTNER MOTHER BIGBONE, AND THE REST OF THAT HAPPY FAMILY, TOOK THEIR DEPARTURE FROM THE HOUSE.

"SUCH were the causes which had thrown Mr. Leonidas Shark into the extraordinary career of *living phenomena*.

"'I say! master,' said he to La Levrasse, when Mother Bigbone had looked out to ascertain the carrier's departure, 'we are all alone; I may therefore use my arms.'

"How great was my surprise; I had until then sincerely believed that the long sleeveless gown which the man-fish had on covered his fins; La Levrasse, manifestly vexed at his new boarder's indiscretion, made him an expressive signal, to induce him not to expose the secret, and resumed:

"'If you persist your fins arms, to appear like other men, well and good, my lad. But to speak seriously, here is a little urchin who will assist you at all times, and his arms will supply your want of them.'

"Leonidas looked at La Levrasse with astonishment, and continued:

"Father Boulingrin, when he engaged me, did not tell me of any such condition; what, may I not make use of my arms even among ourselves? And would you feed me by hand as if I had the palsy? Come, master; I have had quite enough by remaining pent up in my tub all the way here; I play my part as well as I can before the public, but when once I return to private life, I resume the use of my natural gifts, and especially of these.

"So saying, the man-fish drew out, through the holes on each side of his gown, his two spare, meagre arms, enclosed in the sleeves of a flannel waistcoat, and began to shake and exercise them to make amends for their long and tedious confinement.

"'Know then, you blockhead,' cried La Levrasse, that in order to entice the public into our snares, we must appear to believe in them ourselves; the babble of a little urchin like that (La Levrasse pointed at me) may upset every thing; would it not have been better to have him for a serious gossip? However, that is your own business. Leonidas, my hearty, from the day the people refuse to trust to your fins, it 's all up with you, and you must cut.'

"'The fact is, master, that there really lurks a great philosophical truth in what you say,' returned the man-fish, with ludicrous gravity; 'the whole science of human life consists in the art or artifice of *making people believe in your fins*.'

* * * * *

"The arrival of the man-fish had only diverted my attention for a moment from the fate of Bamboche, about whom I felt the greatest anxiety, as he was the victim of his attachment to me. During several days, all my efforts to discover my friend were vain; every morning, I saw Mother Bigbone go down into the cellar to fetch him up to take his lesson; but each time she returned in a passion, exclaiming that he obstinately refused to perform the least feat or exercise.

"Then La Levrasse, stealing silently along, with the look of a wild cat, would descend into the cellar, where he continued a quarter of an hour at most; and then he would return without any noise having been heard—not a single cry; and if I inquired about my little companion, the juggler only answered me with a ridiculous grimace.

"Leonidas Shark, who was affectionate to all, of an apathetic and timid disposition, only coveted one thing; and that was peace: he appeared, however, quite contented with his lot, listened with a stoic's patience to Mother Bigbone's coarse speeches, or to the sullen and more disguised language of La Levrasse; his appetite was good; he lay in bed half the morning, and sat in the sun when there was any; there, no doubt, he moralised at his ease, reading again and again his divine Seneca. Now and then, he took up a posture and exercised his artificial fins—then he would eat a raw fish, '*to keep his hand in*,' said the juggler.

"Leonidas has since confessed to me that he did not at first consider my condition a hard one; and that when he compared my *muscular* education, which enlarged my strength, my agility, and address, without unfitting me for other professions, with the useless university education he had received, he thought it was far preferable to his.

"One day, he offered to teach me to read; in spite of my earnest desire to learn—I refused his offer; for I feared to show myself unfaithful to Bamboche by responding to the friendly advances of this new companion, and by becoming too intimate with him.

"This false man-fish likewise afforded me a wide field for reflection; I looked upon him as a new proof to support the evil principles of Bamboche; for one day Leonidas Shark, revelling in the sun, with his beloved Seneca in his lap, and stretched upon the grass in the yard, with a copious breakfast before him, said to me carelessly:

"'It is after all to the raw fish I eat and my fictitious fins, that I owe the blissful life I enjoy: it was in vain I became a scholar, in vain I desired to work to gain my living like an honest man;—for in the midst of it all I was starving with hunger. Now I cheat the good people with my fins, and I feed and guzzle like an alderman.'

"'So Bamboche then is right,' thought I; 'here is another man who had no luck until he began to lie and cheat.'

"For want of means to rejoin my friend, I conceived the idea imitating him; thinking that they might perhaps shut me up along with him. So one morning I likewise refused to do my feats.

"'Little Martin,' said La Levrasse, to me in his thin, canting voice, 'I won't even give you a fillip; but since you refuse to work, I will double the dose I am giving Bamboche—*on your account*.'

"This threat disconcerted me; for I knew the villain was capable of executing it; I therefore attempted another course.

"'Show me the most difficult, the most dangerous trick, and I will learn it, though I break my neck in the attempt, on this condition: that, when I have learnt it, you will forgive Bamboche.'

"'Agreed,' said La Levrasse, with his cunning, spiteful smile. 'When you can do the *rabbit's leap*, your friend Bamboche shall be pardoned.'

"Nothing can be more painful or dangerous than that trick: it was done in this manner:—you had to leap from the top of a kind of platform six or eight feet high, to turn right over yourself, and then fall upon your feet. The least awkwardness was enough to make you miss your aim, and occasion the fracture of a limb or the rupture of the collar bone; almost always mortal. The hope of obtaining Bamboche's pardon made me so eager, that I wearied out even the robust and active Mother Bigbone; my strength was exhausted, and still I persisted. At length, seized with dizziness and weakness in the midst of my practices, I fell down so unluckily, that I broke my left arm.

"This time La Levrasse was accessible to a touch of pity, and granted me my friend's pardon. I had just been removed to my bed by Leonidas and Mother Bigbone, when Bamboche came in. I never knew what was the secret motive he had to tell him the cause of my injury; but that stubborn, self-willed child, who bore the most cruel infliction without ever uttering a cry, or yielding a jot, threw himself upon my bed in tears, and exclaimed:

"'It was for me—in trying to get my pardon, that you broke your arm.'

"Was it not for my sake that you suffered the whole week?' said I to him, embracing him with unspeakable joy.

"'Oh! how touching, oh! how heart-rending! hi, hi, hi,' cried the juggler, making faces, and pretending to cry in a ludicrous manner, whilst the man-fish, sincerely moved, and seeing that his presence was no longer required, went out to read over again, as he said, the famous treatise *De Amicitia* (on friendship).

"If I dwell upon these mutual proofs of puerile attachment that Bamboche and I exchanged during our infancy, it is because they lay down the foundations of that affection which subsequently, in spite of the difference of our situations—the most opposite moral opinions, was never even shaken; and which on both sides ordained the greatest sacrifices, which were always religiously performed.

"When, alone with Bamboche, I considered him attentively; I was terrified at the sullen alteration in his features: he was paler than usual—his sufferings must have been very great indeed.

"'They have been hurting you very much?' said I to him.

"'Oh! yes,' replied he, with a sinister smile and a look of savage joy, 'oh! yes—I have been greatly hurt! Thank God!'

"'Thank God?'

"'Yes: I shall one day have so much injury to do La Levrasse.'

"'Then he must have put you to great pain?'

"'He made *my grandfather visit me*,' answered Bamboche, laughing wildly.

"'What do you mean?'

"He tied to my feet one of the iron weights which we use in our exercises, and then he took me under my ears and lifted me off the ground for several minutes, and he repeated it several times.

"Now I understand why he said that his punishment would make no noise.

"'A man would not suffer more if he was flayed,' said Bamboche in a hollow voice; 'sometimes I felt as if my head was being torn from my neck, blue flames seemed to flash before my eyes, and I fainted. I did not attempt to struggle with La Levrasse—he is too strong; it would have been of no use; but I did not give way, and I said to myself: 'Go—go; put me to all the torture you like—you are only heaping up your own pile. Stay till Basquine comes, you shall see how I will pay it all off again in *red money!*'

"I was terrified at the expression with which Bamboche uttered the last threat.

"The cares which my injury required, after the arm had been rather skilfully bandaged by Mother Bigbone, accustomed to such sort of accidents, and a letter received by the juggler respecting our new Basquine, whom we were to take up on our road, hastened our departure.

"According to the habit of almost every mountebank, our master owned a kind of wandering vehicle, which, during our travels and our performances in the road-side exhibitions, was used as a dwelling by the company.

"This carriage, which was about fifteen feet long and ten feet high, was divided into three compartments, lighted on the outside by cats'-holes, and communicating from within by means of small doors; the front room served as a storehouse, the middle one as a kitchen, and the back one as a common lodging. This kind of chamber, of rather a spacious size, was laid out like a ship's cabin: eight beds, in the shape of boxes, seven feet long and three wide, were arranged in two rows, the one above the other; a vent-hole with bars over it had been opened at the top of the carriage, to let in the light; three horses, hired from town to town for one or two days together, were sufficient to drag along this locomotive house, which, within the space of a false or second flooring, contained the clothes and trestles necessary to put up our stage in the open air. The learned donkey, Lucifer, as strong as any horse, was tied to a small supplementary waggon or covered van, alternately driven by the juggler and Mother Bigbone, who were thus enabled to watch the progress of the larger vehicle from without; finally the carrier who had brought the man-fish was summoned to bring his cart, and one fine morning our caravan forsook the house hitherto tenanted by La Levrasse.

"I had not heard a single word about my late kind master, Limousin. To all my questions on the subject, the juggler had answered by silence or by a grimace. I therefore devoted one last thought to the memory of the honest bricklayer, at whose hut, at least, I had never suffered any ill-treatment, and I settled myself in one of the beds with Bamboche by my side; he paid me a thousand attentions with brotherly kindness, and every now and then he evinced a delirious joy on thinking that we should soon see Jeannette.

"La Levrasse determined that we should make our first stoppage at the next town; for there we should meet with a surgeon to dress my wounds afresh. We should also meet in that place a number of young girls, who, already forewarned, were expecting the arrival of the mountebank, to sell him their heads of hair which he always purchased on the spot and brought away himself, as he used to say when speaking of those capillary harvests, *those barbarous dealings in which the human being descends below the brute, and sells a part of the human body for bread.*

"The following day we expected to arrive at the village where the wheelwright was dwelling, who was the father of the beautiful Jeannette, the new Basquine of the company.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW THE POOR VILLAGE GIRLS, HAVING NO MONEY TO BUY BREAD, BROUGHT THEIR HAIR TO MARKET, AND HOW A CERTAIN YAHOO BOUGHT THAT COMMODITY OF THOSE POOR YOUNG WOMEN, FOR THE RICH OLD LADIES AT COURT.

"I SHALL never forget the strange and mournful sight which I was a witness to in the town of Folleville, where we stopped to lay in a stock of hair, and to dress my wound. The fracture was a *simple* one, said the surgeon; the first dressing had been so neatly performed by Mother Bigbone, that I was certain of a speedy cure.

"The population of the town was numerous, and having been *tickled* by the recent passage of the man-fish, La Levrasse was prevailed upon to give a *short performance;* it consisted of the exhibition of the *phenomena*, and a few feats of strength executed by Mother Bigbone and Bamboche. To save the trouble of setting up our canvas theatre, the mountebank determined that the performance should take place in a barn, and that Mother Bigbone should look after the receipts, whilst he went to gather his crop of heads of hair.

"My wound prevented me from being present at these exercises. The surgeon had bandaged my arm in a parlour at the inn; and there it was that, for the first time, I saw La Levrasse practise the strangest of all his vocations.

"Seated on a chair with my arm in a sling, I saw ten or twelve women come in: they were almost all young; two or three of them were rather pretty—but the sordid poverty of their ragged attire told but two plainly of the last degree of want; their countenances spoke of sadness and still more of confusion, as if they experienced a kind of shame whilst making this last sacrifice to misery.

"Many, many years have passed, and yet that mournful scene is still present to my mind in its smallest particulars.

"A gloomy light, which scarcely penetrated through the green panes of two windows, patched over with cobwebs, hardly enabled you to see across that spacious room, with its low ceiling lined with black beams, and dirty white walls; two logs of wood smoked on the hearth amidst a vast pile of ashes.

"The mountebank's *customers*, as he called them, were waiting for him—some seated on a long bench, the rest on the edge of a table or on stools. One of these poor girls was standing apart, half concealed by the shade which projected from the high chimney; I could hardly distinguish in the dark her white coif, the skirt of her tattered petticoat, and her naked feet.

"All these women seemed to be uneasy, and anxious to know whether their hair would suit La Levrasse. By some words which fell from them, I understood that they likewise felt considerable shame to be the only ones in the borough, who, driven to it by want, had yet consented to sell their hair.

"Some few among them appeared careless or resigned to the sacrifice: one of them, sitting on a table, hummed a tune, whilst beating a dull monotonous measure, by striking her wooden shoes against each other; another kept eagerly munching a lump of hard black bread.

"The door opened, and La Levrasse came in; he wore his costume, half male half female: red pantaloons, green petticoat, a tight frock or short gown made of coarse black cotton velvet; his hair was turned up Chinese fashion. At his entrance, all the women stood up with that humble and interested deference which the needy seller always testifies to the buyer.

"My master looked both merry and jocose; he made them a grotesque bow as he cast a long wide look round about him upon his *customers*.

"'I wish the company good morrow,' said he in his shrill squeaking voice; 'the market appears well supplied.—Come now! my little chicks, let us make haste, I am in a hurry: quick, quick,—off with your caps! and display your heads. The *crops* must be devilish fine to induce me to buy them, I warn you beforehand, for they are offered to me every where almost for nothing, so dear is the bread.'

"At this speech the greatest uneasiness appeared in every face.

"La Levrasse perceiving me, said:

"'Little Martin, you have one arm left; assist me to draw this bench close to the window; I never buy a pig in a poke, not I: but I like to see my goods clearly.'

"I assisted my master to draw the bench close up to the windows, which thus formed a right angle between them: the light falling thus upon the heads of the young women, enabled me to judge the shades and hues of their hair more perfectly.

"'Come, my chicks,' said the juggler, 'the market is opened.'

"The poor creatures hastened to take their seats upon the bench—all save the girl who still continued hidden in the shade of the chimney, and nothing of whom could I see except the white coif and bare feet.

"'And—you, there said La Levrasse to her, 'are you not coming? There is room enough still for you.'

"'By-and-by, sir,' replied a mild timid voice, which seemed to me to be broken by her tears.

"'Good, good,' said the juggler, 'the last one the best, eh? you want to be coaxed do you? Very well, my dear—these tricks are well known; and you won't get another farthing by it.'

"Then turning to the women who were seated on the bench, he added:

"'Come, my chicks: off with your caps!'

"For a few seconds, a feeling of regret, of shame, almost of modesty, seemed to paralyse those young women. At length, one of those who appeared most resigned, pulled off her wretched coif.

"This action was like a signal: all the heads of hair were suddenly loosened and fell down over the shoulders of these poor girls; white, brown, chestnut, dark or light coloured; some thin and silky, others thick and coarse, and a few tufted and crispy; and one or two, partially grey, had been as much as possible prepared for the purpose;—for, alas! it was easy to see that each of these women had done her best, as the juggler expressed it, to *set off her goods*. A sad and painful coquetry it was!

"'Umph, I am not to be bitten that way, I tell you,' exclaimed La Levrasse, passing up and down the bench, inspecting, handling, weighing, and even measuring each *crop* with a foot-rule, to ascertain the length, the flexibility, the weight, and the colour of the hair. 'No, no, I am not to be done,—and let

me tell you,' added he tittering, 'I am up to these *shifts*, my little *chicks*. I know what can be effected with charcoal and powder, oil and hog's lard—to render a true rusty crop as showy as the best.'

"Then having once more examined *the goods*, he cried out:

"'Really, really, I am not in luck to-day. In my rounds this year, I can't find any thing fit for my purpose, neither here nor elsewhere. Positively,' added he with a look of discontent and disdain, after glancing once more at that row of heads buried in their streams of hanging hair; 'positively, none of these can do for me. They are as coarse as horse-hair—good for nothing.'

"A sigh of painful disappointment broke out from every breast, till then stifled by the anguish of suspense; then by a spontaneous move, all those dishevelled heads bent and drooped still more.

"'What the devil can I do with all this stuff you offer me? I don't deal in horse-hair and hemp,' added the juggler with that brutal savageness of the broker who wants, above all, to depreciate what he means to buy.

"'Come, my dears,' resumed he, 'cover your heads again. I can do nothing with you; it was not worth my while to come at all.'

"During this degrading scene of cruelty, which oppressed my heart, though I could not then fully understand it, I had noticed the girl in the white hood, standing in the shade of the chimney, come out of her nook and steal softly towards the door, put her hand upon the bolt of the lock, then suddenly stopping, stoop her head in dejection as if hesitating to go.

"I have seldom seen such soft regular features, as she had: she was about seventeen; a wretched red-cotton handkerchief scarcely covered her neck and shoulders; her petticoat, patched in twenty places with various-coloured stuffs, was kept up by list braces. Her beauty must have been great indeed, to have been so apparent in spite of her pale and meagre cheeks, stained with the tears she had just been shedding.

"After standing a few seconds at the door, with her hand on the latch, the young girl appeared to do violence to herself; she raised her fine blue eyes to heaven, and then slowly returned and resumed her place in the protecting shadow of the chimney.

"At that moment La Levrasse was saying rudely:

"'Come, put on your coifs; I see I can do nothing with you. It was not worth my while to come at all!'

"Then, walking a step or two towards the door, the heartless villain added:

"'Good night, ladies all!'

"Then it was that a scene of bargaining began, infinitely ignominious and deplorable.

"Deplorable, because it went to your heart to see those unfortunates, who knew but too well the high price of bread, as La Levrasse had observed, intreat and supplicate that man, or rather that fiend in human shape—some even with tears and sobs—to buy at any price their hair: that poor and last resource on which they had so greatly depended.

"Ignominious, because the mountebank, gloating with scandalous rapaciousness on the misery of those forlorn creatures, stubbornly beat them down to the last penny, repeating, over and over again, that the purchase was against his interest; and thus mercilessly forcing down the price.

"At length, tired out with the struggle, the wretched girls underwent the offers of the broker; they had asked three or four francs for their *crops*: the juggler with difficulty consented to give them one franc instead of three.

This vile stipend was accepted. It was, at any rate, enough to buy bread for three or four days.

"Then there came another moment which made a cruel impression upon me: it was when I saw, in a measure shorn, all those heads lately adorned with the long undulating hair which La Levrasse cropped with his enormous shears, and which he afterwards made me carefully tie up on skeins with ribbon.

"The bargain was no doubt a most capital one, for the sardonic visage of La Levrasse glittered with joy, and his malicious jokes were incessant the whole time.

"'Instead of being sad, rejoice, my little chicks,' said he, as he gnashed the shears over those stooping heads he was despoiling; '*these heads of hair, which were of no use to you, will shortly have the honour of adorning those elderly ladies of the court, who wear wigs and fronts. They will be set off with turbans, gold and silver stuffs, magnificent jewels, and superb diamonds*—your own hair!—whilst on your heads they would only have been covered with greasy caps and handkerchiefs. And besides, you who complain for ever of poverty, you will be able to say at least that a portion of yourselves will ride in carriages, and take part in the finest entertainments in the capital. Is not that flattering? I hope it is; and yet it costs you nothing; on the contrary, it is I who pay you. You see, my dears, I am too good to you, a very fool, an ass; and therefore it is I declare to you, that, for the future, I will not pay any thing: the crops shall be given to me for the sake of honour.'

"The cruel jests of the heartless mountebank were interrupted by the beautiful young girl I have mentioned.

"She came forward to the window, sat down bashfully on the end of the bench, took off her little coif, and bent her head without speaking.

"At the sight of her magnificent affluence of jet black hair, which rolled out to such a length that it fell to the floor, and folded about her bare feet, so thickly, too, that it hid the young girl's ragged attire and enwrapped her as in a black mantle; La Levrasse, in spite of his habit of depreciation, could not help exclaiming:

"'This is superb!—extraordinary! I never saw any thing like it.'

"A murmur of surprise had greeted the appearance of the young girl, until then unnoticed by her companions; one of them said in a whisper:

"'See! there's Josephine, who is going to sell her hair; she who is about to be married.'

"'With Justin, whom she is so fond of,' said another.

"And then was seen on almost every face present a look of pity and concern. Josephine was mild and good, since she raised so much interest in her companions, who had yet resigned themselves to the same grievous sacrifice.

"'Are you going to be married, my pretty maid?' said the juggler, looking upon her, and scanning with a covetous eye the splendid length of hair displayed before him, and handling it with a joyful shudder. 'Well! you are right to get rid of *that*; it is useless to a thrifty housewife, and not worth a good legacy,' added La Levrasse in a jeering tone. 'And I will give you that legacy. Here it is; look—a bright new forty sous piece. I trust I do things as I ought, in a spirited manner, for I only paid these ladies twenty sous for their *crops*. But what a difference!'

"'I want—I want to have four francs,' stammered out Josephine in a low tremulous voice.

"'Four francs!' exclaimed the juggler; 'four francs! You must be mad! Do you want to hold a Balthazar's festival to celebrate your nuptials? Four francs! I cannot encourage such prodigality. Four francs! Come, let us say fifty sous, and have done.'

"So saying, the ruffian seized with a greedy and eager hand, the long black hair of the young country girl.

"'Poor Josephine!' muttered one of her companions, whilst the rest all testified by their mournful looks how deeply they sympathised with her.

"But Josephine, pushing back La Levrasse, said

with an expression of grief and shame, which evinced how much she suffered by this contest :

"'I want to have four francs—I must have them!'

"Then the poor girl, having turned quite purple with shame, hastened to add, as if to excuse her *cupidity* :

"'It is not for me; but I must have them—I must indeed: it is unavoidable.'

"'Four francs!' said La Levrasse, brutishly, 'four francs!—you joke! I should be robbed.'

"Josephine darted up. The action pushed aside the thick hair which veiled her charming face. Tears were pouring down her cheeks. At the resolute look she gave as she stooped to pick up her little coif, which had fallen on the floor, the mountebank fearful of losing so good a windfall, cried out:

"'Well, come, you naughty girl, you shall have the four francs; but I am a loser by it. There, I give you two francs more.'

"Josephine sat down a second time, bent her head, and said in a low tremulous whisper:

"'I wish to keep, when you have cut it, a small lock of my hair.'

"'What more!' cried La Levrasse· 'why, my dear, you are never satisfied.'

"Then, after reflecting a moment, he resumed :

"'Well, you certainly have bewitched me. You shall have your little lock; but a mere rat's tail, mind, no more.'

"And again he raised his horrible shears.

"'Sir—stop,' cried the young girl, grasping the juggler's arm; 'it is but four francs, after all; 'and if we all clubbed together,' she added, looking at the rest.

"Yes—yes, that's right; we will,' cried several of the young women.

"'Indeed! you are dying of hunger; and yet you want to be generous,' said La Levrasse, bitterly struggling to shake off the young girl's grasp, which prevented him from plying his shears.

"'So you forget how dear the bread is?'

"Alas! once again misery stifled the kindest instincts of their hearts; and once again the imperious voice of necessity silenced the first cry of generosity that had sprung up out of the soul.

"The juggler's harsh words reminded those poor creatures that they were too poor to practise compassion. Is not that the last and lowest stage of misery?

"A dull and gloomy silence succeeded that generous burst from the companions of Josephine; the latter, who had perhaps been buoyed up with a momentary hope, cried out impatiently:

"'Make haste, sir, make haste.'

"The mountebank did not wait to hear this recommendation repeated; he plunged his shears at once and closed them upon that magnificent hair, which falling down on every side, soon exposed the mild and pallid face of Josephine, bathed in tears and now completely shorn.

"La Levrasse, true to his promise, delivered to the poor girl a long lock, no thicker than one's little finger. Josephine rolled it up and placed it in her bosom.

* * * * * *

"Then I could not help weeping; and since that day I have retained a vivid recollection of that painful scene.

* * * * * *

"It is possible that some very *positive* people will smile contemptuously at this, and say jocosely:

"'God help us! what a heap of arguments for a few handfuls of hair! What care we if those village girls are shorn like so many singing boys in a choir? It is twenty sous added to their earnings.'

"But you will pity them, young women, who as you smile before your glasses, delight to decorate your lovely hair with flowers and jewels; or, more coquettish still, to leave it in its naked beauty.

"You, too, will pity them, fond and happy mothers, who take pride in the long pendant tresses which crown the angelic brows of your daughters, whom each night you so tenderly embrace.

"You will pity them, likewise, you lovers who have so often printed your warm kisses on the soft, moist, and perfumed locks of your beloved.

* * * * * *

"The short performance consisting of Mother Bigbone's exercises, and the exhibition of the man-fish had been very fruitful.

"The next morning we set out at break of day in order to reach that same evening the little borough where we were to meet the new Basquine of the company.

"During the whole of that day, Bamboche could hardly contain his happiness, his joy, and love; he was on the eve of seeing again his Jeannette, who was never more to leave the troop.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TRAP THAT WAS LAID BY THE MOUNTEBANK TO LURE BASQUINE FROM HER POOR DYING FATHER.

As fast as we drew nearer to the little borough where we were to meet Jeannette, the new Basquine, my curiosity became more eager and vivid; Mother Bigbone drove the carriage containing the bathing tub of the man-fish. La Levrasse sat on the covered seat of our long vehicle, in which Bamboche and I were by ourselves. The fits of delirious joy which he felt at the prospect of meeting with Jeannette, were followed by others of fear and dejection; he would then say to me in a broken voice:

"'If Jeannette's father, who loves her so dearly, had changed his mind and refused to give her up to La Levrasse, then—I don't know what I should do.'

"And then that boy of thirteen burst into tempestuous passions, as violent as they were premature, till all his features were contracted with their shock.

"'Cheer up,' said I to him, 'if they won't give up Jeannette to La Levrasse, what then? Why we'll leave the juggler, and hire ourselves as servants to Jeannette's father.'

"Bamboche shrugged his shoulders at this conception so ingenuously romantic.

"'Her father is starving,' answered he; 'how can he hire servants? And even if he did I should gain nothing by it.'

"'How so?'

"'What a ninny! would not her father, her mother, and her brothers, be in my way? Should she and I be free as we shall be in the juggler's troop, until the time comes for us to bolt?'

"'Oh! heavens!' exclaimed I, all of a sudden, struck with a new idea.

"'What now!'

"'You are mad for Jeannette—you mean to run away with her; but suppose she did not love you; have you thought of that?'

"'Occasionally.'

"'Well! what would you do?"

"'Beat her till she did love me.'

"'Would you beat her?' cried I, 'poor little thing—would you beat her?'

"'Against my wish; but still I would.'

"'Beat her to make her love you!' replied I, stupified at the thought; 'but that would make her hate you, on the contrary.'

"Bamboche smiled with pity for my innocence, and said to me in a tone of fierce energy and incredible assurance:

"'To make the women love you, you must make them fear you;—the *Rump-in-the-Bowl* told me so a

hundred times: he had sweethearts who fought with knives for him: they would have leapt into the fire to please him; and they used to give him all they got themselves. And yet they were all so much afraid of him, that they nicknamed him the black tiger, and a cold sweat came over them whenever they spoke to him.'

"I bowed to the experience of the wise Rump-in-the-Bowl.

"'Since you are certain of it, well and good,' said I, with a heavy heart: 'but do n't beat her too hard, —poor thing!'

"'If she loves me of her own accord, I won't beat her till by-and-by (not for my own pleasure; for if the effects were the same, I had rather a hundred times be beaten myself); but I shall beat her to intimidate her; for, as the Rump-in-the-Bowl used to say—'when a woman does not fear you, *she shows you her tricks.*'

"'It 's a pity to have to beat them so much,' said I to my friend, sighing.

"Bamboche sat for some moments pensive, and after a pause, he resumed with a sullen look—

"'There 's but one thing which I fear.'

"'What?'

"'That La Levrasse might also fall in love with Basquine!' replied Bamboche, clenching his teeth with anger and fury.

"'What he? at his age!' said I.

"'Did not Mother Bigbone make me her lover?' answered Bamboche, rudely: 'and there 's another will be certain to abominate Basquine. And then the clown we are expecting,—if he is as great a blackguard as the last was—I mean Giroflée, who has entered the *Seminary*,—he might likewise fall in love with Basquine: I remember how Giroflée used to tease the little girl who died.'

"Then, stamping with rage, his large grey eyes flashed, the veins in his forehead were swollen with passion, and he cried out—

"'Hold, Martin! I tell you;—I feel that I *shall do mischief* for love of Basquine!'

"The horrible, but still not improbable, love of La Levrasse, or our future merry-andrew, for the poor child—the jealous hatred of Mother Bigbone—the strange means to which Bamboche was to resort to win her love, appeared to me to present so terrific and complicated a prospect for the future life of Basquine and Bamboche, that I continued silent, whilst my companion appeared to sink deeper and deeper into his sad thoughts.

"At this time only,—whilst writing these lines after so many years have elapsed since these events, —I can fully estimate their monstrosity; and unfortunately experience—a sad and bitter experience —has proved to me that these fearful horrors were far from being exceptions to the rule: those who have not had the courage to dive into the depths of certain social bogs, can never know—will never believe —how much vice and infamy is engendered by misery, ignorance, and isolation or abandonment.

"But at the period I refer to, being quite a child, and, save a few good instinctive feelings, without any notion of right or wrong; thrown into that medium of cynical depravity, I soon became accustomed to it, and lived in it as in my natural atmosphere: that which disgusts me to-day, seemed to me at that time a very simple matter, for want of any test to judge by. I accused, not other people's vices, but my own ignorance; sometimes, it is true, certain principles—certain facts of unusual enormity, would *astonish* me, but not *make me indignant*: they could not do so: at what school of morality and virtue could I have learnt to feel that indignation?

"No,—as it happens that a child brought up with the most tender—the most austere solicitude, feels an undefined preference for certain qualities—certain virtues, more adaptable to his mind, his heart, and his temper, I felt, since my abode with the juggler, a similar undefined preference for certain vices: idleness, cheating, vagrancy, and even theft as a last expedient, had their attractions in my eyes: but violence and cruelty were repugnant to me; and, in spite of the erratic, amorous confidences of Bamboche, I did not yet feel the *impulse to love.*

"And yet—(an evident proof that man is generally created good, or, at least, inclined to every generous sentiment)—in spite of the detestable examples by which I was surrounded; in spite of the deplorable tendency they every day fostered within me, I was worthy—I was capable of accomplishing every duty, and every sacrifice dictated by friendship. And so it was with Bamboche: more than once already had he proved his devotion to me, although some frightful instructions had already long since plunged that unhappy child into a gulf of corruption, far deeper and more hateful than mine.

"It was towards nightfall that we reached the borough: we got down at the Tall Stag Inn, where La Levrasse usually stopped. As we alighted, he asked the inn-keeper how father Paillet, the wheelwright was getting on.

"'He is on his last legs,' replied the landlord;—'and then, what a state of wretchedness is his!—eleven children—a bedridden wife! The parish allows them two loaves a-week out of charity; but what is that among so many?'

"'Very good!' cried La Levrasse, without concealing his gladness.

"Soon after, assuming a look of compassion, he said to the landlord—

"'Tell me—have you any cold provisions that I can take away with me directly?'

"'Yes, sir; there 's a splendid turkey just off the spit, and a large pie fresh from the oven.'

"'Good!—let us have the turkey and the pie,—wrap them up, and put them in a basket, with two four-pound loaves, and six bottles of wine.'

"'All for that poor family?' cried the inn-keeper, with boundless admiration. 'Ah! Monsieur La Levrasse; you are not half known! What a charitable man you are!'

"'Go, go, my friend,' answered my master, in a tone of modesty and contrition: 'I do n't do all I could wish to do.'

"Whilst the inn-keeper hastened to get the eatables ready for us, the juggler said to Mother Bigbone—

"'Give me the bag.'

"'Here it is.'

"'Is the garland inside?'

"'Every thing is in it.'

"'Good!' returned La Levrasse: 'now let the horses have a feed of oats, and when they have eaten——"

"I could not catch the rest of what my master whispered to Mother Bigbone, who replied—

"'Agreed;—that will be better!'

"'So!' continued the juggler: 'in an hour's time —down yonder!'

"'Yes,—down yonder—in an hour,' returned Mother Bigbone.

"Then, turning to me, my master said—

"'Here, Martin, take this bag in one hand,—and you will carry the basket on your other arm.'

"And then he gave me an old green cloth bag, —very light of weight, though pretty full.

"Bamboche had remained under the care of the man-fish: I was sorry to be charged with an errand which would have been so agreeable to my comrade, by bringing him immediately in connexion with Basquine. As soon as the landlord had brought out a heavy basket, exhaling the most dainty smell, we set forward. I carried the burden; and followed my master, who, contrary to his habit, put a cloak round him: he seemed anxious, and walked on quickly before me.

"We came to a dirty muddy lane—on one side leading to the borough, on the other to the fields,

A few old broken wheels, leaning against the wall, and a pile of pieces of timber obstructing the door, served to point out the poor wheelwright's dwelling.

"Night closed upon us, as we entered a sort of spacious shed, which was used both as a work-room and a lodging for that numerous family,

"This species of shed—large, gloomy, and damp—was lighted by a glazed impost or arch, placed over the door, and by the pale reflection of a small fire of smoky chips, round which a dozen children had gathered, the oldest not above fourteen; all of them ghastly pale, lean and shivering, and barely covered with a few dirty rags. Raised above that heap of little creatures who surrounded her, a woman with dull looks, hollow eyes, sickly pallor, and whose bones in a manner came through her skin, lay half reclined along a wooden bench with a back to it. The lower part of this woman's body, almost entirely locked with the palsy, was hidden beneath pieces of blanket. The moment we entered we heard several of these little children crying and groaning, whilst their mother, in a weak moaning voice answered their complaints.

"'But, my God! my God! Since there is no more bread, what would you have me give you? To-morrow, you shall eat again, since it is the day we get the parish bread: but, till then—why—you must wait, my poor children!'

"'To-morrow, mamma! that 's too far off!' cried the children, weeping: 'we are still very hungry, to-night!'

"In the back part of the shed, I descried a wretched pallet, on which lay the wheelwright, the father of all that family, almost at the last gasp,—with his eyes sometimes fixed in a stare—sometimes half shut—he seemed quite unconscious of all around him. He had put one of his arms about the body of his pet child—his little Jeannette (the future Basquine), who was sitting on the edge of his bed. He seemed instinctively to try to protect her, by keeping her beside him in a convulsive grasp. Now and then he muttered in a low voice, marked with terror—

"'The man!—the man—is coming! Take care,—great care—of *the man!*'

"No doubt, the man of whom the wheelwright spoke in his delirium, was La Levrasse.

"As for Jeannette, I had never seen—nor have I seen since then—anything that came near the delightful face of that child, of eight or nine years old. She had nothing on to cover her save a wretched shift of yellow linen, full of holes, which left her arms and legs bare, and exposed them to view, somewhat lean, but as white as alabaster: a forest of flaxen hair, curling naturally, but matted together, falling over her large black eyes, covered both her neck and shoulders. Nothing could be finer, more gracefully delicate, than the small features of that lovely face,—albeit, slightly hollowed with misery and want.

"Her countenance wore an expression of sadness. Two or three times, I saw the little angel press her pale rosy lips to her father's skinny hand; then, thanks to that mutability of impressions, which is proper to her age, she resumed a low melancholy dirge or chant, infinitely soft and sweet, and kept beating time to it by striking her naked feet together. Our arrival had not interrupted this chant; but as soon as she saw us approach her mother, Jeannette left off singing; and then, with an action of childlike grace, she brushed aside the hair that shaded her eyes; and afterwards, bending her head a little, her little hand still buried in her thick pale hair, her elbow resting on her knees, she fixed her dark liquid eye upon us, and watched us with a look astonished, uneasy, and inquisitive.

"The poor wheelwright, still in great pain, did not perceive our entrance; but yet, every now and then, he would draw his lovely child to him, and repeat in a weak voice of alarm:

"'*The man! the man!*'

"The fear of La Levrasse haunted Jeannette's father as a fixed and steady thought, even in his delirium and mental wanderings.

"The wife recognised my master.

"On seeing him she raised her eyes to heaven with a mixed feeling of anguish and hope, and exclaimed:

"'Holy and gracious Virgin! it is *the man.*'

"Whilst the children, still clustered together, turned their astonished little faces towards us, the juggler softly closed the door, set his finger to his lips with an air of mystery, took from me the basket of provisions, and perceiving a table, began to display the roast turkey, the pie, the bread, and the wine very openly and conspicuously.

"On beholding these nice dainty eatables, the starving children rushed wildly to the table; the bigger ones overturning the smaller.

"La Levrasse stopped them short both with look and gesture, and said to them—

"'One moment—these good things are not yours yet: but it depends upon your mother to give them to you.'

"'How?' exclaimed the wheelwright's wife.

"My master, instead of answering her, bespoke silence anew by a sign, whilst the children, suffering the pangs of a raging hunger, and driven beyond all bounds by the exhibition of a feast more sumptuous than they had ever known before, stood by like *hounds on the slip* at a few paces from the table.

"The woman, dumb with amazement, stared bewilderingly at the mountebank. *Then taking out of my hands the green bag, and drawing out a small red silk frock spangled with silver, and a pair of green velvet buskins spangled in the same way, and a garland or coronet of artificial roses mounted on a silver foliage, he went up to the pallet of the dying man, whose white ashy lips still moved without articulating any sound, and exposed the glittering gaudes to the eyes of little Jeannette.*

"The poor child, dazzled and stupified with wonder, clapped her tiny hands together, and staring with all her might, exclaimed:

"'Oh! how fine! how grand!'

"'Hush, hush! it is for you,' said La Levrasse in a low whisper to the child, making a sign to her to leave her father's pallet.

"'Come,' added he, 'I will dress you in this beautiful frock, that your papa may see how pretty you will look when he awakes. Mind you don't disturb him—make no noise.'

"The child easily disengaged herself from the expiring hold of her father, and in a few seconds the juggler had bedecked the future Basquine with the rose-coloured frock, the velvet buskins, and the coronet mounted on its silver leaves. The little girl suffered herself to be dressed with astonishment mingled with innocent joy, to see herself look so fine; whilst the mother said to the juggler:

"'But, pray sir, why do you dress our little girl with——'

"Again the cunning rogue laid his finger across his lips and imposed silence, and leading Jeannette to her mother, said:

"'Look at your daughter; is she not bewitching in this dress? And you, my dears,' continued he, turning towards the rest of the children, 'see how bravely decked out your sister is, my darlings!'

"Some of the children had not been diverted from their eager and famishing attention to the repast that was spread out before them; the rest had silently watched their sister's metamorphosis; but, one and all, when questioned by the juggler, cried out:

"'Oh! how fine she looks now, Jeannette!—how very pretty she is!'

"And then for a moment even their hunger was forgotten to contemplate the glittering charms of little Jeannette.

"In the next place, my master, as a last means of

temptation, no doubt, drew from his pocket a bag of money, and for a moment let go the little girl's hand.

"The child ran directly to her father's pallet, climbed up it, and, full of joy and her face beaming with smiles, leaned over him and kissed his cold livid cheek, as she said:

"'Look, papa! see how fine I am now—do look at me!'

"The wheelwright made no answer. His eyes continued fixed and half sealed; he moved his arms faintly, and his lips muttered a few inaudible words.

"'Papa is asleep—he is dreaming,' said the child, sitting carefully on the edge of the bed; and then, seemingly awaiting his rousing, she began to hum a tune and to play with the coronet which she took off her head, and whose silver foliage, intersected with roses, seemed especially to excite her admiration.

"Never, no never, can I forget the strange, the profound impression which, young as I was, was produced in me, when I saw that charming little girl, adorned with her red spangled frock, sitting in that gloomy shed, on a wretched pallet, beside her dying father.

"In the meantime, my master, holding the bag of money and drawing close up to the woman, had poured over those pieces of blanket which covered her knees a large shower of five-franc pieces—three hundred I think it was.

"Next he unfolded a paper already drawn up, and holding out an ink-horn, he dipped a steel pen into it, offered it to the woman, and said to her:

"'Sign this, my good lady—and then that nice supper will belong to your children, and the money to you; the fortune of little Jeannette will thus be secured; and besides——'

"A loud scream from the pallet interrupted my master.

"I had kept my eyes on Jeannette, and not one of her father's moves had escaped me.

"When the dying man heard the tingle of the silver, he sat up convulsively, glanced his haggard eyes around him, and cried out:

"'*The man with the money! it is the man.* He wants to take my Jeannette;—help! help!'

"At the sound of those cries, at the sight of those livid, wan, and disordered features, the little innocent burst into tears, flung her arms round her father's neck and clung to him, whilst the wretched father, hugging with all his feeble strength his little pet to his heart, repeated in a voice that was sinking more and more:

"'*The man! the man!* I won't have it. I had rather die, and keep Jeannette. It was my wife who

consented—who wrote to *the man*: not I—I never would—and——'

"Here a convulsion seized on the dying man; he could not go on; he became stiff, fell upon his back, drawing Jeannette along with him; whilst she, uttering the most heart-rending cries, still wove her tiny arms round her poor father's neck.

"'Oh! my poor husband! Holy Mother of God, take pity on him,' cried the wife with the most bitter grief. 'Oh! my God, my God! to see him thus, and not be able to go to his help; and all those children there round that table. Miserables! they forget their father and only think of eating.' Then she added, as if reproaching herself: "Alas! poor little ones, they are so hungry!'

"'Sign, then—sign quickly,' said La Levrasse, impatiently seizing the woman's hand. 'Sign!—all this money is yours; your children will then want for nothing; you will have the means of providing a nurse for your husband;—and I will undertake to make little Jeannette happy.'

"Then he addressed the children thus:

"'Entreat your mother to sign, and you will never know again either hunger or cold;—this nice supper will be yours, and many other things.'

"The poor children, without understanding what he wanted, mechanically obeyed La Levrasse, and exclaimed, as they knelt down to their mother:

"'Sign, mother—do sign!'

"'Sign!—sign what?' said the miserable woman, her head almost crazy, as she heard all at one time her husband's dying groans, Jeannette's afflictive cries, and the prayers of her other children.

"'Sign the articles of Jeannette's engagement until she is twenty-one, and ensure her lasting happiness.'

"The poor woman, giving way to her fright, to her emotions, and the desire of putting a stop to the dreadful misery of her children, signed, amidst her sobs and tears—even without reading it, the articles or bond of Jeannette's engagement.

"'Now, children,' cried the juggler, 'sit down and eat.'

"Alas! it was a true feast, indeed; the children fell over one another and scrambled for the supper with devouring rage, tearing and contending for each mouthful, whilst my master having returned the bond to his pocket, ran up to the sick man's bed to carry off Jeannette.

"The unhappy child shrieked with despair, and amidst her sobs cried out:

"'Papa! I will stay with you! I won't go!—I won't go!'

"The mother could not bear this; she threw off the money my master had left on her lap, and exclaimed:

"'Take back the money, and leave us our child. God's will be done! you sha'n't carry off our child.'

"The juggler made no reply, but shrugged his shoulders, and easily contrived to lift the little girl off her father's neck, the wheelwright, at that moment, seeming to have lost all consciousness; then holding in his arms the child, who struggled in vain, he said to the woman as he made towards the door:

"'It is too late to retract—I have the articles in my pocket: you are bound to comply.'

"'My daughter! return me my daughter! Look—he is carrying off my daughter!' cried the poor mother, as she saw him fold his cloak about Jeannette. 'Help, children, help! do n't let him out; follow him—throw yourselves upon him. Holy Mother of God, come to my help! he is stealing my child! My husband will kill me!'

"The famished children thought only of satisfying their raging hunger, and did not obey their mother's orders, so that the mountebank, supporting his light burden, soon threw open the door.

"I had stood rooted to the spot, terrified, and in the midst of the room; to rouse me from my stupor my master had to face about at the door-sill, and to roar out to me in a thundering voice:

"'Are you coming?'

"I ran out without knowing what I did, and when my master had shut and prudently locked the door, I still heard the wheelwright's wife crying out, as if raising a fervent prayer to heaven:

"'Most gracious Virgin take pity on me! Holy Mother of God come to my relief! Must I always supplicate in vain?'

"My master dragged me away with his iron grasp, and forced me to follow him as he strode swiftly away.

"Contrary to my expectation, instead of crossing through the town, we went out of the other end of the lane into the country. When we had walked about a quarter of an hour through the fields we came up to our vehicles, which had been brought there by the juggler's orders, no doubt to wait for us on the highway.

"It was then utterly dark; we soon left the town pretty far behind us, thanks to the swift pace which La Levrasse urged his horses to take, as if his cowardly heart had dreaded a pursuit."

Reader, whatever this little child may do hereafter, remember the manner in which she was torn from her home; and be assured that her history is the sad history of thousands of other poor girls, *who err because they are pushed unwillingly into the gulf of crime, whence there is no escape for the repentant.*

CHAPTER XVI.

BASQUINE'S ILLNESS, AND BAMBOCHE'S SYMPATHY.

"At first overwhelmed with grief, weeping, and for ever calling for her father, her mother, and her brothers, little Jeannette—whom I shall henceforth call Basquine—fell dangerously ill, and her life was almost despaired of; but her youth, and the incredible force of the vital principle in so young a child, saved her: after some time she appeared to be born again—prettier and more than ever charming.

"The arrival of Basquine, whom he had so ardently desired to see, and pined for, produced a singular effect upon Bamboche. His love, in the first instance, and then the poignant anxiety which had so long disturbed and troubled him whilst he awaited the issue of La Levrasse's measures with the wheelwright, had so violent an effect on the energetic nature of that boy, that when he learned from me that Basquine was come, and was in the cart with Mother Bigbone, the blood suddenly rushed to his brain; his head became dizzy—he fainted; and that strong excitement, as it reacted, turned into a hot fever almost immediately afterwards.

"Basquine having likewise, on her arrival, languished into illness, my master, much to his regret, was compelled to stop for nearly a whole month at a small town, in order to procure the necessary attendance and medical treatment for his two pupils; not through affection, nor even human respect—but for the sake of his own undertaking; for the juvenile exercises of Bamboche, Basquine, and me, together with the exhibition of the phenomenon, the manfish, promised him a plentiful harvest for the future.

"The ties of friendship which united me to Bamboche, were already of the strongest; but the different incidents which arose out of his illness, and that of Basquine, strengthened them still more, and made them indissoluble. And thus it fell out:

"La Levrasse, availing himself of this unexpected stay to travel as a pedlar and hair-merchant, in the neighbourhood of the small town we were obliged to stop at, had set out with his donkey, Lucifer, with the expectation of a profitable tour.

"We had been joined by the merry-andrew, the *red-tail* of the company; his name was Longleak,

and he had come to fill the place of Giroflée, the former buffoon, who had since, according to Bamboche, entered the seminary to prepare himself for the priesthood; and at a later period I discovered that so it was.

"Longleak was a tall stripling, thin-flanked, unshapely, with features that were regular but withered by the constant expression of ignoble, obscene, and wicked thoughts. In his usual conversation he could not utter two words successively without intermixing them with filthy, smutty ideas of the most revolting coarseness. This pitiful fellow soon became the pet of Mother Bigbone; and even though Bamboche had not previously enlightened my innocence, the free and easy disregard with which this road-side Messalina and the Jack-pudding indulged without any scruple in their foul and lascivious *amours*, would have revealed what my young comrade had explained to me, *and what Basquine, that pure ingenuous child, was so soon to learn herself*, in that centre of shameless depravity, in which she was henceforth fated to live—poor little spotless lamb! flung almost at her birth into this heap of pollution.

"But I will not anticipate the fearful, the horrid revelations which are in store: they cannot but come too soon; and I require all my force of mind to recall that epoch of my life,—a courage all the greater, that, thanks to my ingenuous commerce with vice, I felt no indignation at that time against what now makes me shudder.

"La Levrasse being absent, Mother Bigbone and Longleak engrossed with their *amours*, Bamboche and Basquine ill in bed, the man-fish and I were left alone to attend the two patients, and to look after the domestic requirements.

"The cares of the household, such as the cooking, the superintendence of the linen and clothes of the company, had devolved upon the man-fish, on the authority of Longleak, who assumed the dictator. I never could tell why he had conceived from the first a fierce aversion for poor Leonidas, whom he delighted to teaze, to vex, to torment, and even to beat and belabour with perverse and cowardly persistency; for Leonidas, in spite of his heroic name, was the most timid and harmless of men. But the worthy second-prize man, invoking to his relief the stoical philosophy and the forcible maxims of his divine Seneca, bore all, and endured all with resignation that might have made the heart beat within a statue.

"'You see, little Martin,' said that good simple-minded creature; 'here I have enough to eat, my bed, a shelter to cover me, and clothes: I have leisure to read my Seneca whilst I am skimming the pot or stewing the ragoût for Mother Bigbone and that—' (here Leonidas lowered his voice, and looked round about him with affright lest he might be heard)—'*great scoundrel*, Longleak, who has taken a dislike to me, as the *crabs* used to do at school, when they hated me on account of my successes: but it's all one—I am used to it; and every day I bless the habit I have contracted of receiving all sorts of buffets from the cradle. Besides, you see, little Martin, all are not rose leaves in life; and, when I reflect that, after having toiled like a negro during my early youth, I was left two days without bread and without a shelter, and that in my despair I threw myself into the water, I dare not accuse fate. As for thinking of revenge,' added he, with a sigh of regret and shame; 'I am as weak as a flea, and as timid as a rabbit. Mother Bigbone would smash me with one blow of her mighty fist, or Longleak would break me to pieces with one kick with his long feet. But as, after all, justice must be done sometime or other, as there is a vindictive Providence to guard the oppressed!' resumed Leonidas, in a triumphant, solemn tone: 'as a second-prize man of the University, crowned and embraced a hundred times by His Excellency the Minister of Public Instruction, amidst the flourishes of trumpets, and hailed by him as the *hope of France*;—as such, a scholar is, after all, fit for something better than to be the butt and victim of an ignorant jack-pudding and a coarse lubberly female Hercules. I——' here his voice dropped again; 'I often fling a huge handful of salt in their broth-pot; and, faith!—it must out—I trust the secret to your honour, Martin,—I sometimes skulk in some dark corner of the kitchen like a thief; and there—all alone—hidden from every human eye—I spit a little—nay, wherefore blink the truth—I spit most copiously into those succulent ragoûts which my voluptuous tyrants condemn me to dress. And then they eat them without any suspicion, the wretches! They eat them; and I think myself revenged! But no, my vengeance, the hydra, returns to life: if this goes on it will be too much for me, and I shall fall into a decline.'

"As he imparted to me his horrible secret, Leonidas faltered, and his voice became almost inaudible: he looked round about him in dismay as if he had confessed to me a crime of the very blackest dye.

"Leonidas, therefore—exclusively taken up with his household and culinary—cares could not assist me much, so that I remained almost alone to tend upon Bamboche and Basquine, fallen ill almost at the same moment: the one of despair at being separated from her father and her beloved family—the other, of the violent shock which had been given to him by the certainty that for the future he should be able to live with that child whom he loved with a passion as deep as it was precocious for his years.

"Bamboche's burning fever having turned into a typhus fever, he had been separated from Basquine by the physician's instructions; so I divided my attention between my new companion and my friend.

"Basquine, who had arrived at night, and was put to bed in all her infantile sorrow, in our long vehicle, had become seriously ill that very night, and had not seen Bamboche then, nor did she see him at all for about a month after she had joined us.

"Her despair evinced itself at first by perpetual sobs, interspersed with the cries of '*Papa, papa—help—help!*'—as if her father could have heard her: and then, when she was no longer able to weep, she fell into a nervous crisis, succeeded soon after by sullen dejection, or broken sleep agitated by gloomy dreams.

"I spent by her side all the time I was not taken up with Bamboche. She hardly seemed to know I was there: sullen, moody, and distrustful, she did not utter a word. A physician came to visit her, but she obstinately refused to take any thing that he prescribed. The thought occurred to me to promise her, if she would let herself be guided, an early meeting with her father.

"Poor little Basquine! I see her now, lying in the large bed of a dull, miserable room: her angelic face pale, marble-tinted, had become surprisingly lean in the course of a few days; her fine, fair hair, usually curling, but then dank with cold feverish sweat, had fallen in long straight strips about her face and shoulders: her large eyes dry, red, and swollen, looked up to the ceiling, and her two tiny hands clasped together over her bosom, when I had said to her—

"'Hear me, Basquine; if you are a good girl, and will drink what is in this cup, you shall soon see your father again.'

"Too weak to sit up, she turned her head quickly towards me: her eyes filled, large tears soon showed themselves; her lips quivered, and she said to me in her gentle weak voice—

"'You do n't tell me a story?'

"Disconcerted for the moment by the candour of that look, in which I could read at once hope

and painful distrust, I was silent awhile, and then answered in a tremulous voice—

"'No,—I do n't tell you a story.'

"Basquine probably remarked my hesitation; for she replied, looking at me very pointedly—

"'Do n't—do n't deceive me: the good and Holy Virgin would weep for it!'

"It was the first time I heard speak of the good Holy Virgin; nevertheless, I replied fearlessly—

"'No; I am not deceiving you!'

"'Shall I see papa again, if I drink that?' said Basquine, without looking off me.

"'Yes—quite sure!' returned I.

"'Give it me,' said the child. And she drank it off at a single draught.

"From that moment she testified some reliance on me, and kept continually asking me when she should see her father.

"The counsels and example of Bamboche, the fear of ill-treatment, the necessity of hiding my faults, or of palliating them in the eyes of my harsh tutors, had long used me to deceit. I found no difficulty in deceiving the innocent Basquine, by leading her to hope for, and expect from day to day the arrival of her father, who, added I, would certainly take her away with him.

"These deceptions, at any rate, assisted her recovery. She resigned herself from that time to take whatever the doctor prescribed for her; and the hope of soon returning home having relieved her mind, her health grew better every day.

"I have preserved an impression, which nothing can ever obliterate, of my first childish conversations with Basquine; and now, when I collect these ever-present remembrances, I am struck with the native rectitude, propriety, and honour which must have been implanted by the education or rather the example given by the honest wheelwright to his child; for, in general, *example* is all the education the poor receive; and almost always, when speaking of them, it may truly be said—'LIKE PARENTS, LIKE CHILDREN.' Consequently, to judge by Basquine, her father must have been an honest, hard-working, exemplary man. And as for the wheelwright's wife, she must have shared that superstition so affecting in the cases of poor distressed mothers—a native and ingenuous faith in the intercession of the good Virgin; for often had Basquine, in her illness, spoken to me of the good Virgin.

"Poor, dear little angel! who was fated so soon to be initiated, as I myself already was, in the obscene and smutty language of the Coryphœuses of our company; and to things far—far worse! for I have shameful, and most painful confessions to make: I have to speak of the strange part I played in the precocious amours of Bamboche and Basquine; a part, too, which I performed with a degree of incredible simplicity, corrupt as it was, being blinded on the other hand by the deep, the devoted, the almost fanatical attachment I felt for Bamboche.

"This is how and on what occasion I uttered his name for the first time to Basquine.

"During the first days of her convalescence, whilst speaking to her of her father, to cheer her, for she was always asking after him, I told her he must have worked very hard to provide for his numerous family.

"Basquine replied:

"'Oh! yes, papa did work very hard: he did not even leave off on Sundays; and at night, too, he would often work again. We used to see him, because we slept in the shed with mamma. Once, papa had already spent three nights without stopping; I was sleeping with my little sisters; mamma awoke us. She wept. She said to us: '*Children, look at your father.*'

"'We looked as she told us.

"'Papa, who had begun boring a piece of wood with a drill, had knelt down: but being sorely tired, he had fallen asleep, still holding by the two sides of the handle on which his forehead was leaning. He remained so—without stirring. Mamma kept crying, and whispered to us very low, for fear of waking papa: 'And it is to give us bread that your father overworks himself so much. Pray to the Holy Virgin to take pity on him and us, and to reward him; for there is not a better father in the world. Come, children, go on your knees, and repeat my words after me; but very softly so as not to wake your good father.'

"'We all knelt down; and mamma said, and we repeated slowly and softly after her: '*Good Holy Virgin, do not forsake in his sore distress, if you please, our poor father, who works so hard to give us bread; Holy Mother of God, who protectest all mothers and poor children, listen to a mother and her little ones, and please to reward our poor father for his patience.*'

"'As we finished saying so, and yet very softly, papa awoke: he saw us all on our knees, with our hands clasped; he asked mamma what it meant. She told him; then he took us all up in his arms, and he wept quite loud: for our cheeks were all wetted whilst he kissed us.'

"Many years have passed away since the day when Basquine related to me this simple and touching story.—Many events, many misfortunes, many humiliating trials have I witnessed or been an actor in, which ought to have withered and hardened my heart; and yet, at the mere recollection of the voice, the accent, the countenance of that poor child, when she related to me that episode of her father's pitiful life, my tears start to my eyes, as they did on the day when I listened to Basquine.

"Deeply touched by a language so new to me, enthusiastically smitten with that faith and hope which Basquine seemed to have in the all-powerful providence of that holy mother of God, the kind and tender patroness of mothers and poor little children, I said to Basquine in all sincerity:

"'And did the good Holy Virgin reward your father?'

"'Oh! no,' said the child candidly, sadly shaking her pretty little curly head and sighing aloud:—'oh! no—never.'

"And then remembering what my emotion had banished from my mind—the dreadful scene I had witnessed at the wheelwright's, when the rape of the child took place, I resumed:

"'True; your father was not rewarded for patience by the good Holy Virgin. But then where is the use of praying to her?'

"'Why! I do n't know. Mamma told us to pray with her that we might be less miserable, and that papa might be rewarded. So we prayed, as mamma told us.'

"A detestable thought then struck me: I remembered the horrible death of Bamboche's father. He, too, had worked with indefatigable zeal. He, too, had tenderly loved his child. And yet, for all that, he, too, had died, abandoned by the good Holy Virgin and man. In fine, the man-fish, after having assiduously toiled during his childhood and boyhood, had tried to escape from misery and hunger by putting himself to death.

"Bamboche, the Rump-in-the-bowl's disciple, was right therefore when he said:

"'Those who labour are silly fools; they always die of hunger and misery.'

"The simple story of Basquine, the painful scene I had witnessed at her father's abode, unfortunately gave new weight, in my regard, to the desolate maxims of Bamboche.

"After these reflections, vain-glorious and puffed up with my recent sad knowledge of men, I said to Basquine:

"'You see, your father killed himself with hard working, and the good Holy Virgin neither pitied nor rewarded him; Bamboche's father likewise

killed himself with working, and yet he died in the midst of the woods, eaten up by crows. You see, Basquine, it is foolish to work: it is better to divert ourselves as much as we can, and laugh at the *green canary-birds*. And then——'

"But the contagion of evil and vice not having entirely corrupted me, I could not proceed, so much was I struck with the expression at once of astonishment, sadness, and curiosity, which was evinced by Basquine, when she heard me speak in such a manner.

"What good principles I still retained, rebelled against the thought of giving—so to speak—the first lesson of hopelessness and corruption to that most innocent little creature, and I said to her:

"'Never mind: Bamboche will explain all these things far better than I can.'

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW LITTLE MARTIN WAS DEVOTED TO LITTLE BAMBOCHE, AND HOW HE PREPARED BASQUINE TO LOVE HIS FRIEND.

"BASQUINE, on hearing the name of Bamboche for the first time, looked at me with surprise, and said to me:

"'Who is Bamboche?'

"'One of our comrades—a child like you and me.'

"'And where is he?'

"'In a small room up stairs; he is very ill too. But you know him!'

"'Me?'

"'Yes, a few months ago don't you remember La Levrasse had been to your father's? he wanted to take you away.'

"'O yes, I remember; and when he was gone papa left off his work several times in the day to come and kiss me. He was crying, and yet he was very glad. 'O! they sha'nt take away my little Jeannette,' said he, devouring me with his caresses.'

"'But the next morning?'

"'The next morning?'

"'Don't you recollect that a little boy came to look for a pocket-book that the man had lost he believed at your father's?'

"'Yes, yes; and he asked to be allowed to search for it every where—we assisted him. I looked for it some time along with him; he kept looking at me all the time, and as I stooped beside him, he kissed my neck, without papa seeing him, and that made me laugh very much.'

"'Well! that little boy is our companion Bamboche; he has not forgotten you. If you only knew how dearly he loves you——'

"'He loves me dearly—why so?'

"'Why!' replied I, somewhat puzzled, because you are very pretty, very gentle, very good; since he first saw you he is always speaking about you; so that if you had been his sister he could not love you better.'

"'Then I shall love him dearly too.

"'Oh! that's right; he has suffered so much!

"'He?'

"'Indeed but he has! When quite a child, what do you think? he saw his father die in a forest: the crows wanted to eat his body, but he drove them off as well as he could.'

"'My God! my God!' said Basquine, whose eyes were filled with tears.

"'Nor is that all. Left all alone, without any one to care for him, and much younger than we are, he was obliged to beg his bread on the highway.'

"'Poor boy! without father or mother?'

"'Neither, alas! Then he met with a beggar, a very wicked man, who made him beg along with him, and who beat him almost every day.'

"'To have no father or mother! to beg on the highway! then to be beaten!' repeated Basquine slowly with feeling and surprise still increasing, which sufficiently said that, in spite of the misery in which she had lived till then, she could hardly conceive so cruel a lot as that of Bamboche.

"'And at a later period La Levrasse met him as he was begging on the highway, and carried him off; he treated him very badly, so badly that poor Bamboche wanted to run away. He might have done it.'

"'Then why did n't he?'

"'On your account.'

"'On my account?'

"'Yes. Since he had seen you when he called to search for the pocket-book he was always speaking of you; and as La Levrasse had said in his hearing that sooner or later your papa would let you come with us, Bamboche said: I do n't care if they beat me; let them do their worst; I will stay because Basquine may perhaps come, and then I will never leave her.'

"At this time when experience and reflection both enable me to understand and to complete these remembrances so present to my memory, I can conceive the astonishment of Basquine, and how deeply she must have been moved on hearing these proofs of the affection she had excited in Bamboche; in the ignorance of her age, in the candour of her heart, the poor child experienced for our companion a great sympathy, no doubt, and felt inclined to love him as a brother, because, according to my speech, he liked her as a sister; because he had been till then unhappy, and had even braved the harshest treatment to wait for her to join us. But she seemed rather surprised at this last romantic trait of affection; then she was affected by it: the only thing which struck this pure and innocent creature, was the misery which had attended Bamboche since his childhood; for after listening to me in thoughtful silence, she said:

"'I tell you what: when papa comes to fetch me, he must take Bamboche with him, since they are so cruel to him here. At home, do you see, we are sometimes very hungry, and very cold, but we do n't have to beg; papa and mamma never beat us, because we never do wrong. We never tell stories; we do as we are bid; we learn what mamma teaches us: if we did not, we all know it would grieve her very much; and we pray the good Holy Virgin for us and for those who are still poorer than we are ourselves. So do you see,' she continued, after reflecting a moment, and with a charming grace, 'I must have been praying to her for Bamboche without knowing it, and she must have protected him, since papa will bring him away with us, that he may not be beaten here any more.'

"Although this protection of the good Holy Virgin did not appear very effectual to me, I could not bring myself to say any thing that might disturb Basquine's hopes, and I answered her:

"'So it shall be; your father shall carry Bamboche with him.'

"'And you too,' added she, looking at me with ineffable sweetness; 'for you are kind to me—you are always by me.'

"'Oh! if Bamboche had not been ill, he would have attended on you much better than I.'

"'Do you think so?'

"'Oh! yes, surely.'

"'And why would he have attended on me better than you?'

"That terrible *why*, so constantly in children's mouths, puzzled me sadly; I turned aside the difficult question by saying:

"'He loves you still more dearly than I do, Basquine, because he has known you longer.'

"This reason did not quite satisfy Basquine; she reflected for a few moments, and then said to me with an accent of ingenuous curiosity:

"'When shall I see Bamboche?'

"'When he begins to get well again.'

"'Is he then worse than I? Poor Bamboche!'

"'Certainly; he does not know me yet.'

"'But, since I am able to get up, I will go and help you to nurse him,' said Basquine. 'Last year, my sister Eliza was taken ill, and I assisted mamma to nurse her.'

"'It cannot be,' replied I; 'it would be too dangerous for you.'

"'But so it must be for you?'

"'No: I am not, like you, just recovering from sickness.'

"After pausing again, Basquine said to me with a thoughtful look:

"'Bless me! how I wish dear papa would come soon, to take us all away from this—you, Bamboche, and me.'

* * * * * *

"Several days after this conversation,—nor was it the only one of the kind, in which I spoke to her of my sick companion in the most favourable terms,—Basquine appeared to feel a growing affection for Bamboche; the latter, for the first time since the attack of his fever, experienced a sensible improvement; his senses returned; he knew me again, and after he had collected his thoughts, his first question was:

"'Where is *she?*'

"'She is here, and like you—she has been very ill.'

"'She too,' cried he, in deep anguish, 'and now,' added he, turning to me, and shuddering:

"'Now she is safe,' said I.

"Bamboche made no answer; he burst into tears; I threw my arms round his neck; he pressed me to his heart as much as his exhausted strength allowed him; and we remained so for a few minutes, speechless, melted, and both of us weeping.

"Bamboche was the first to break silence; he said to me with an earnest look of gratitude which there is no describing:

"'I had hardly any sense left, and yet I sometimes fancied I saw you, as in a dream, come and go: night and day you stood there; I am sure of it; it did me good—it comforted me;—for I do n't know how it was, but I believed that the old woman wanted to poison me.'

"Then suddenly breaking off:

"'But Basquine—who then has been nursing her?'

"'I have!'

"'You?'

"'Yes!'

"'But you were always here with me?'

"'Not always. When you became a little quieter, especially at night, I used to go and watch Basquine!'

"'Her too,' exclaimed Bamboche, with a burst of gratitude; then, pausing a moment, he added in a tone grave, sincere, and almost solemn:

"'O, Martin, Martin! you have a right now to bid me leap into the fire for your sake, and I would do it.'

"Then he repeated with a look of intense gratitude:

"'And her, too.'

"But all at once his pale face grew paler still, his eye-balls darkened, and became wild, and I could see the nervous quiver in the corner of his mouth, which in him was a symptom denoting a revengeful feeling; he abruptly drew away his hand from between both of mine; then, striving to read to the very bottom of my heart, he fixed upon me his large grey eyes still sparkling with fever, and said in a low dumb voice:

"'So you spent several nights near to her?'

"'Yes,' replied I, innocently, although greatly surprised at the sudden change in his countenance. 'Yes, I stayed there every night and every moment that I was not with you.'

"'And were you with her all alone?' said he, in a voice which grew thicker and deeper every moment.

"'All alone; Mother Bigbone was always shut up with Longleak; the man-fish would sometimes come to attend and watch Basquine, but not often; for he was so tired with his cooking and household drudgery, that he went very early to bed.'

"'You were with her all alone?' repeated Bamboche, his eyes gleaming with lurid light.

"'Why, yes! I was with her all alone; but—what's the matter with you then? how strangely you look at me!'

"Bamboche made a sudden effort to fling himself upon me, but his strength betrayed him, and he fell almost out of bed, muttering—

"'Villain! you love her. Yes,' added he, clinging to the bolster; for, in my amazement, I did not think of helping him up; 'you have been saying spiteful things to her about me: I am sure you have. *I will kill you both!*'

"This violent shock exhausted all his reviving strength, and he fell back immoveable on his bed.

"At first I had not understood the jealous feeling which had irritated him against me; but after he had so clearly explained himself, I was painfully grieved and felt indignant: but soon after my indignation was succeeded by a sense of inward satisfaction, full of benignant tenderness. My conscience told me I could not only appease the jealous anxiety of Bamboche, but moreover prove to him how very far I had carried the devotion I felt for him.

"The violent sally of my poor comrade was followed by deep dejection: he remained without motion, stretched upon his bed: I leaned over him. I was stung to the heart;—I looked into his face and saw its expression: it was no longer anger, fury, or hatred; but a grievous—a pitiful despair. His sunken and hollow cheeks were drowned in tears. I leaned fondly over him;—he shut his eyes that he might not see me, and his tears continued to flow in streams.

"I was deeply, and I may say tenderly, moved at the sight of that grief—of that show of weakness so unusual in that boy, in general so rude and violent. How happy I shall be, by-and-by, I thought, to undeceive him; to tell him—to prove to him how far I was from wanting to sever Basquine from him.

"'You are crying,' said I to Bamboche.

"'Well! I know I am: it's mean and cowardly,—I do n't deny it,' answered he, in a broken voice; but I can't help it. Had I been torn to pieces, I would not have uttered a cry: but now, I feel a pain in the heart, as if it were wrung, and I do cry in spite of myself.'

"Then, resuming the natural violence of his temper, he added between his teeth—

"But I sha' n't always be so cowardly! No,—I will be revenged on both of you. Oh, yes, I will be revenged!'

"'I ask but one thing of you,' said I to him, smiling; 'and that is, to do nothing rashly, and to get well as soon as possible.'

"Bamboche thought I was railing at him, and he replied by a groan of agony and passionate rage.

"'Yes,' continued I; "because when you are able to rise, I will lead you to Basquine, and you shall then see who it is she loves—me or you.'

"Bamboche started up in his bed and looked steadfastly in my face.

"No doubt he read there the sincerity of my words, for his brow relaxed, and he exclaimed—

"'She loves me?'

"'Oh! yes! truly. She loves you well, already.'

"'But she never saw me but once at her father's?'

"'But I, since she has been here, have spoken to her so often about you, as soon as she was able to listen to me. I have so often told her how much

you had suffered since your father's death, with the beggar—and even here with La Levrasse—that——"

"'You told her all that about me?' cried Bamboche.

"And then he seemed to drink in each of my words, as if they had restored him to hope—to happiness—to life. His chest expanded—he revived once more.

"'You told her all that about me?' he repeated.

"'And many other things, too. I told her how you might have run away from here, where they tortured you without pity, but that you had remained to wait her coming; for since you had seen her at her father's, you thought of nothing but her. But now, since she loves you, you won't want to beat her, will you?'

"Hereupon, the flexible features of Bamboche changed their expression again: it was no longer gratitude—it was not distrust, nor hateful despair that spoke in them: no, but it was confusion, and affliction, and shame to have so cruelly misunderstood me—a singular mixture of supplicating tenderness and self-reproach. That resolute and indomitable boy clasped his hands together, got upon his knees on the bed, so weak was he still, and in an imploring voice exclaimed—

"'Martin! my brother—forgive me—have pity on me!'

"'There—be quiet—you pain me,' said I, turning my head away, so full of real suffering did his countenance appear. 'If you are happy, why torment another?' added I, wiping my eyes.

"'Martin, you must say you forgive me,' returned Bamboche, with burning anxiety; 'you really must.'

"'Do I want to pardon anything?' cried I, throwing my arms about him: 'are you not pardoned already—since you are happy again, and call me your brother?'

"'Oh! yes, my brother—my true and only brother—for ever!' muttered he in a tone of unspeakable happiness.

* * * * * *

"Since that day Bamboche and I have grown older by many, many years; we have met in many different, contrary, and fearful situations; but never have we been able to speak of that scene of our childhood without weeping.

"A few days after this conversation, Bamboche was completely restored to health.

"One morning, the weather was dark, lowering, and tempestuous. I cannot tell the reason, but this fact struck me at the time: I led my friend, for the first time, into Basquine's chamber!

"In spite of the sincere joy I felt at the happiness of Bamboche, the moment we entered that wretched room, my heart felt heavy and almost bursting within me.

"It must have been, no doubt, an instinctive consciousness that, from that day—from that moment, the fatal destiny of that unhappy child had set in; and that I was myself, unwillingly, and without knowing it, one of the instruments of that fatal destruction.

"As well through discretion as through fear of disturbing, by my sudden and involuntary sadness, that first meeting, I left the room when I had said to Basquine—

"'This is my good brother, of whom I have so often spoken to you.'

"'Oh! yes!' said Basquine, in her simple innocence; 'and already do I love him dearly.'

* * * * * *

"About an hour afterwards, seeing Mother Bigbone and Longleak suddenly return,—though we had fancied they had gone out for the day, but they were forced to come back owing to the weather—I rushed into the cabinet in which I had left Basquino and Bamboche: I meant to acquaint them with the arrival of our masters; for it had been settled between us that he and she should counterfeit illness as long as possible, in order to postpone the practice of our exercises.

"So I went in.

"Basquine, seated on her bed, was playing with Bamboche's black hair, which had grown very long during his illness, whilst he, sitting at her feet, on a small stool, his elbows resting on his knees, and his chin between his two hands, was silently gazing on her with ineffable tenderness, mingled with a bashful timidity, which I could not but remark.

"My sudden return appeared by no means to surprise my two friends.

"Bamboche arose—came to me, and said in a faltering voice, pointing to Basquine—

"'Brother, this is my little wife for ever!'

"'Yes; and Bamboche shall be my little husband: we shall go home with papa as soon as he comes. Bamboche will help him in his work, and so shall you, Martin.'

"Bamboche gave me a look which I understood, and said to Basquine—

"'Yes; our good brother, Martin, shall come with us: we will never part from him: will we, Basquine?'

"'Oh! never!' replied the little girl, with charming graciousness; 'for he is our common brother.'

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"I have since been informed, by Bamboche, that that first interview had been an innocent and pure one, as it was proper it should be.

"And yet, although countenanced by the harmless language of children, those words—*little husband, little wife*,—made my blood run cold under a painful and inexplicable influence: it appeared to me that the impression would have been very different if Bamboche and Basquine had called each other *brother* and *sister*.

"There was no jealousy on my part in this reflection; for, in spite of the erratic confidences of Bamboche, my heart was as yet silent: but what I felt was a vague and undefinable uneasiness for Basquine's future lot; in short, those words—*little husband, little wife*,—calling to my mind the amours of Bamboche and Mother Bigbone, I felt a second time, and still more violently, that sense of heaviness about the heart which I had laboured under when I conducted Bamboche to his first interview with Basquine."*

* Undoubtedly, these are strong ideas to place before the reader; but if no writer had the courage to expose these frightful anti-social enormities how could they be weeded out of the community? The too long enduring negligence on this subject—namely, to see certain crimes and not notice them on account of their hideous character,—has now so fearfully multiplied the evil, that no human being can tell how a remedy is to be found to destroy it. The number of crimes existing in large towns that are *let alone*, is prodigious: and this is the case especially in London. A man would think that this vast metropolis had neither a police, a legislative body, nor a church to govern and direct it, so little is done of what there is to do. And so it will be; and the black evil will continue to grow blacker every day, unless the supineness of the ruling authorities be visited by punishment, and a right reverend bishop be now and then brought within the area of the Old Bailey to answer for his omissions.—*Translator's note.*

THE MEMOIRS OF MARTIN.

SECOND PART.

CHAPTER I.

THE MOUNTEBANK GIVES A GRAND PERFORMANCE.

"THE month of September was drawing to a close; for about eight months Basquine had been a member of the company; our many peregrinations had at last brought us to Senlis.

"Here we intended to begin by giving a grand performance; since the previous day a gigantic poster had been put up in every part of the town, and thus did it run:

A GRAND PERFORMANCE

Will be given for the initiation of the Gymnastic troop of the famous Joseph Bonin, called La Levrasse.

FIRST PART.

Scenes of fun and mirth between the Merry-andrew and his Master.—Glee Songs by little Basquine, only nine years old, and her friend the Merry-andrew.

SECOND PART.

The great Human Pyramid, consisting of the Female Hercules, Martin, Bamboche, and Basquine (the eldest of these children is but thirteen).

After which will be exhibited,

The famous MAN-FISH, *caught in the waters of the river* NILE, *by an amateur. Nature has bestowed upon this incredible phenomenon superb fins instead of arms; he lives, lies down, eats, and sleeps in the water, and feeds upon nothing but living fish, which the honourable company of visitors shall see him eat* RAW.

This wonderful phenomenon is so mild, playful, and tame, that he can speak four languages: FRENCH, LATIN, GREEK, *and* EGYPTIAN. *Those persons of the town who may honour the* MAN-FISH *with their visit, may address him in any of these four languages, and he will answer them on the instant.*

The performance will conclude with a FENCING-MATCH *between the celebrated* FEMALE HERCULES, *and the Provost of the Fencing Academies of Moscow, Constantinople, Persepolis, and Caudebec.'*

"The Mountebank having hired a proper piece of ground near the outskirts of the town, on the Paris road, we had fixed and settled our camp accordingly on that spot: a spacious covered tent was erected for the exercises—the public entrance to it opened at the foot of the high scaffolding, surmounted with several painted canvasses, the largest of which was a glaring picture of the Man-Fish.

"Our travelling carriage, in which all of us lodged, was stationed behind the booth, which, being lengthened in this part, and divided from the arena by a cloth flap, served the double purpose of a stable and a store-room for the provender of our three horses, and the black donkey Lucifer.

"We had made the day before a general rehearsal *in private:* all our exercises had been done with surprising and harmonious success. For five months that our Gymnastic tour had already lasted, no performance had ever looked more promising.

"So great is the power of habit, that, save the time spent at my lessons, ever full of agony and torture, I endured my present lot rather joyously. When once in presence of the public, I exerted myself to do my best, and my conceit was singularly tickled, when I received my share of applause. I should no doubt have seriously resigned myself for the future, to adhere to the precarious profession of a tumbler, had it not been for the constant and sleepless hope, of some day leading with Bamboche and Basquine, that happy life of the idle and wandering gipsy which had become the subject of our daily dreams.

"Whenever I asked Bamboche when we were going to leave the juggler, he always replied with a look of mystery:

"'Not yet. I am the most of all to run away with Basquine, but we must bide our opportunity.'

"'Can we not leave any night we choose?' said I to him; 'they do n't lock us in now.'

"'I know it—nothing would be more easy.'

"'Well!'

"'The time is not yet come.'

"'Why?'

"'First, because as yet *I have not found what I am looking for.* And then," added Bamboche with stifled hatred, "I won't leave them *without paying my debts:* my turn too must come, I should think!'

"'When you say you *have not found what you are looking for,*' returned I, 'what do you mean by it?'

"'That 's my secret," answered Bamboche, with double gravity of look; "neither you nor Basquine must know it; but, cheer up—it concerns more than me: it concerns all three of us, this secret does; and, as soon as it is possible, we shall out.'

"So I waited patiently for the time settled by Bamboche, for our escape, when suddenly I learned that the hour was come for our freedom.

"When the stage of our performances happened to be within a town, our custom was to lodge at an inn; but when we pitched our tents beyond the limits of one, we used to sleep together in a heap in the cart and travelling carriage, partly laid out like a ship's cabin; this arrangement rendered all private conversation nearly impossible at night.

"At supper, after the general rehearsal, a meal which we took in the open air, Bamboche having made me several signs the meaning of which I perfectly understood, I endeavoured to get near him during the few minutes which elapsed between supper and bed-time.

"This time, Martin," said Bamboche to me in a

low voice, quivering under the weight of the tidings he was communicating: 'This time I have found at last what I wanted.'

"And he laid a singular stress upon the words.

"'So to-morrow,' continued he, 'at night, we shall eat, with *my wife*.'

"'Really!' cried I, unable to suppress my joy. 'But why not to-night?'

"'Impossible; I will tell you why. Only take care not to go to sleep to-morrow night; when we are all at rest in the cabin, shut your eyes, but keep awake.'

Then Bamboche resumed with a look of happiness full of triumph though kept under:

"'At last—to-morrow night—as free as birds—and revenged,—oh! fully revenged—for it is quite time I should find a good means—and this is one indeed.'

"The rough voice of Mother Bigbone put an end to this hurried conversation between us.

"'Let us all lie down thunder of heaven!' said the she-Alcides, taking hold of the Merry-andrew by the arm.

"'Eh? we are going to bed, you big tower!' replied Basquine, swelling out her infant voice.

"Then, bursting out into a fit of laughter, she ran and leapt up and hung to Bamboche's neck, whilst La Levrasse, who had not left the table, darted at the two children as they went out thus intertwined a gloomy look of irony and lustful ardour.

"Night soon threw its dark canopy over the carriage, in which we lay down in a cluster to sleep.

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"What I have still to say, to explain the pitiful metamorphosis of Basquine, poor child! lately so innocent and full of candour; all that relates to this awful and terrific change, scorches my paper as I write it. Reader, believe me, our feelings are the same on this matter; but the truth must be told: there are many, many Basquines in France.

"'At present, when I throw back an intelligent and experienced look upon the past, I cannot tell which chiefly prevails with me—disgust, indignation, or dismay; but I am bent on pursuing the task I have undertaken, and am gladly accomplishing it in these pages.

"There is, I feel that there is, something beneficial to myself in this retrospect towards that hateful period. The impulses of horror and loathing it excites in me, and which every day become aggravated, serve to testify that every day I am making further progress in the right way: the pain I feel, the kind of shudder that seizes on me at the bare

idea of crossing again, even in fancy, that abyss of corruption, infamy, and shame, tells me aloud that it is not enough to be averse to crime, but that I am bound, mean though my condition is, to do my utmost to anticipate, prevent, or cure that evil by which my hatred and terror are incited.

"Yes—what I have still to relate in order to explain the transformation of Basquine scorches my paper. And yet, *I shall leave much—very much, unsaid;* there are crimes so abominable that my pen will fall from my hand—nor shall I dare reveal them.

"The unhappy child had left her home innocent and pure, like any other child of her age, bred and nurtured by honest and hard-working parents.

"In the course of eight months—what do I say? after two or three months' sojourn in our troop, constantly hearing the lewd and obscene jests of the Jack-pudding, the curses, and blasphemings, the cynical observations of all about her, Basquine at first laughed at this lewd and obscene language, which too soon she understood, and by degrees began to swear and blaspheme like the rest of us—for, need I say it? like her, and long before, I had been subdued by the same corrosive influences.

"Entirely recovered from her illness, and though still frequently asking after her father, Basquine gradually felt her grief driven away by our coarse and vulgar mirth. Bamboche and I strove by a thousand ingenious contrivances to dissipate the returns of sadness which sometimes affected her as she brooded on her family; she likewise took, by slow degrees, a great liking for her lessons in dancing and singing, (most licentious songs to boot) which were given to her by Mother Bigbone, La Levrasse, and the Merry-andrew: endowed by nature with wonderful agility and grace, she soon learned to dance most bewitchingly two or three *pas de caractère;* her sweet infantile voice, gifted with an inexpressible charm, offered a strange contrast to the smutty language of the songs her demoniac instructors put her to sing.

"The first time Basquine appeared in public, in one of our performances, her success was prodigious; the cash taken was enormous: from that hour the child felt a fatal attraction for our calling; and who is there, besides, however rational they may be, could have resisted these ovations, so flattering, so intoxicating, although decreed by that rude and ignorant multitude that surrounded our show—the only theatre within the reach of their poverty?

"After our performances—that is to say, after each *hit,*—for she was, as the saying is, *all the rage,* —Basquine's enchanting little face glittered with joy and pride; and she grew so accustomed to our erratic life, with its excitement, its rugged journeys, and its vulgar delights, that at the end of six months, she said to me with a thoughtful look:

"'I think I should die of *ennui,* if I were now obliged to live as formerly I did at home; and yet, when I fret, it is because I am thinking of my good father, my poor mother, and sisters.'

"Basquine, in effect, at first often thought of her family; then her remembrance of them became less frequent: I but seldom surprised her with tears of regret in her large black eyes, suddenly grown sad and thoughtful.

"Once, too, I saw Basquine experience a kind of involuntary and unaccountable fright.

"She had, as usual, sung and danced with astonishing grace: in one of our burlesque preludes she was loudly encored; she vanished—we sought for her in every hole and corner; at length I found her hidden underneath our carriage, among several trusses of hay and straw: she was bitterly weeping, and her face was pale and disordered.

"'What 's the matter, little sister?' said I to her.

"'I don't know,' answered she in an altered voice; 'I was frightened.'

"'Frightened! by what?'

"'By all those people calling me back.'

"'But they called you back to give you their thanks. They all stamped and roared like madmen, so delighted they were with you.'

"'Well, I was as much afraid as if they had called me back to do me an injury, and I said to myself, as I used to do at home with mamma, 'Good Holy Virgin—Mother of God, take pity on me.'

"Was it instinctiveness? was it a presentiment of the fatal tendency to her in that career she was beginning to run? I cannot tell; but, though then a child myself, this singular behaviour in Basquine made a deep impression on me.

"'What could you be afraid of?' said I to her, 'and why implore the Good Holy Virgin to take pity on you? You never did better.'

"'Very true,' replied Basquine, wiping her tears, 'and for all that I was afraid. This is the first time I ever felt so.'

"Then she added in a timid voice:

"'You must n't tell Bamboche—he would beat me for being a coward, and then he would torture himself, which I can't bear to see.'

"Bamboche really put into practice the ignoble principles of the Rump-in-the-Bowl relative to the *art of making a woman love you:* he would sometimes beat Basquine; immediately afterwards, from a strange notion of compensation, he did himself ten times more hurt than what Basquine had suffered, and would say to her, whilst he bore his self-inflicted torture with heroic courage:

"'I only beat you to show you that I am your master, but not for the sake of hurting you, since I am doing myself ten times as much as I did to you.'

"Among other instances to support this irrational mode of argument, which he never swerved from, I have seen Bamboche coolly thrust a pin five or six lines deep between his nail and finger. In spite of the atrocious pain he endured, his countenance did not betray the least suffering, and he kept saying the while, with the exaggeration of wild and savage tenderness:

"'It 's true, Basquine, I beat you, but I adore you.'

"And then Basquine would throw her arms round his neck, and beg his pardon for having been beaten.

"Unfortunately, the influence of Bamboche over Basquine was not confined to these endeavours of making her forget by his stoic self-inflictions the brutal outbreaks of his anger towards her. The poison of bad examples is so subtle, and communicates, and spreads itself about with so fearful a speed, that the contagion of the execrable maxims of the Rump-in-the-Bowl had already infected three victims—first Bamboche, then me, and lastly Basquine.

"By constantly hearing it repeated by Bamboche that honest hard-working people were the silly martyrs to their honesty and toil; (and he had cited to Basquine the case of her own father as a proof) by dint of hearing cunning, deceit, and, in case of need, theft cried up as *means,* and as *their result,* a happy, lazy, and vagrant life; by hearing for ever that nothing was to be found among the rich but contempt and cruelty, for the unfortunate and helpless, and that these latter ought to look upon the rich as their *enemies;* in fine, after having been brought by degrees, to consider the evil one could do as a just reprisal,—Basquine, predisposed to corruption by the set she lived with, soon fell, as I had done, into the fatal errors of Bamboche. The influence he exercised over her was from that time, doubly powerful, and the poor little creature came at last to love the boy to madness, to feel for him an affection mixed with tenderness and alarm; resentment for the ill-treatment she had sometimes to endure, always giving way to a profound admi-

ration for the indomitable energy and rare intrepidity of his character.

"All this, it is true, in childish proportions, but nevertheless complete. A great writer has said, '*Children are little men.*' All I have seen proves to me the truth of that axiom—especially when the ferment of a precocious corruption has too soon developed the understanding, and given a premature existence in children to the burning passion of virile age.

"Only a few words more, and merely to touch upon this miry theme.

"The passionate love of Bamboche for Basquine had at first provoked the filthy and obscene jests, then the demoniac encouragement of the troop, particularly of La Levrasse.

"The abominable calculation of that man for whom Bamboche felt an instinctive jealousy, will hereafter be seen.

"One day, they played a sacrilegious farce, in which they parodied a marriage between Bamboche and Basquine.

"La Lavrasse played the part of the bridegroom's father, — mother Bigbone stood mother to the bride.

"The Merry-andrew delivered the nuptial benediction in burlesque and smutty language, to the uproarious delight of the laughing spectators.

"There was one present, however, who by a furtive tear, protested against this horrid profanation under the guise of buffoonery.

"I chanced to steal a look at poor Leonidas Shark, the man-fish, who, from the bottom of his tub, took part in the ceremony.—His countenance expressed an indignant grief, and a tear or two, which he hid by stooping his head, trickled down his cheeks.

"This abominable scene was enacted at Troyes, one night after one of our performances, and in the presence of the people of the inn at which we were staying.

"The people saw nothing, and could see nothing, in this parody but a joke, with very little impropriety in it, and one which is fairly enough authorised by the example of those common appellations of *little husband* and *little wife*, innocently permitted among children by the most rigid fathers and mothers.

"The next day Bamboche caused the following words so be tatooed upon his breast in characters which could not be effaced:

"BASQUINE FOR LIFE;
HER LOVE OR DEATH."

* * * * * *

"Such were Basquine and Bamboche, the day before the grand performance we were to give at Senlis, and after which we were to run away—Basquine, I, and Bamboche—who, as he said, *had at last found what he wanted.*

CHAPTER II.

LITTLE BASQUINE, THE MERRY-ANDREW, AND THE GLEE-SONGS.

"NEVER have I seen a finer autumn day than that which was to illumine our grand performance at Senlis.

"The sun had risen brightly; about four in the afternoon the entrance to our open-air theatre was encumbered with spectators, laughing aloud at the broad grins and antics of our Merry-andrew and his master La Levrasse, who were playing the burlesque prelude to draw and collect the crowd; these antics and grimaces were as usual, accompanied with prodigious cuffs and annihilating kicks, the whole of them dealt by the mountebank with whimsical gravity, and received by the clown with the customary reproaches, wry faces, and vociferations.

"After the prelude came the merry scene, or *glee-song*, sustained by the Merry-andrew and Basquine.

"The moment the latter appeared upon the platform, her renown having travelled before her, every voice was hushed to silence, and then a murmur of admiration sped through the crowd.

"'What a pretty creature!'

"'How neatly she is dressed!'

"'She's like a little woman!'

"'What beautiful hair!'

"'Does n't she look saucy? eh.'

"'And what a pretty face!'

"'I only wish she was five or six years older, with that same face of hers; and, then, on my word——'

"'Look at her shape, is n't she nicely made?'

"'And her leg, too, do n't you see her leg? what a pretty calf!'

"'Yes; and the dimple on her shoulders!'

"'Such a knowing look—so arch!'

"'They say when she sings smutty songs, one could swallow her!'

"'Thank God! she is going to sing some of them. They say this scene between her and the clown is very *savoury*!'

"'How delightful!'

"'The pretty little devil.'

"'Very true, she has a wilful look.'

"'They ought to call her Devillene, and not Basquine.'

"I overheard all those observations of the crowd, half-hidden by one of the curtains which ran along the sides of the stage. Now that experience has thrown her light upon my recollections, I can easily account for the impression produced by the child on the gaping throng.

"If Basquine had undergone a moral transformation, she was likewise physically almost transfigured: her features, though still charming, had lost their suavity of childish innocence; and her cheeks, if I may so speak, no longer retained their fresh and ingenuous roundness. Her complexion, though its clear transparency betokened health and strength, was pale, and no longer partook of that milky roseate hue proper to the carnation of childhood. Formerly bashful, almost timorous, her large black velvet eyes, then slightly shaded, lighted on the crowd—lively, free, and confident; whilst a smile, bold and roguish, strayed over her purple lips, lately so mild and innocent.

"The costume so whimsically indecorous in which they had bedecked Basquine, far from shocking the by-standers, was infinitely calculated to please them.

"On her fine flaxen hair, twisted into two large braids which fell down behind her almost to the ground, Basquine wore impudently cocked on one side, a small Greek cap of scarlet stuff, dotted with silver spangles; her boddice, which was half-open, and likewise scarlet and silver, disclosed the symmetry of her supple form, and held up her petticoat by means of thin tinsel braces, thus leaving exposed her neck, her breast, her shoulders, and her arms as white and polished as ivory; her short petticoat of pale blue satin, spangled with silver, not reaching to the knees, discovered a flesh-coloured maillat tightly fitted to the body; her small, slender foot was enclosed within a red morocco buskin, fringed with false ermine.

"I have seen and admired, since then, the divine marble of the *Amour Antique:* the young, shapely, and pure forms of that masterpiece strangely reminded me of Basquine.

"Such was her costume when she appeared on our stage to sing with the Merry-andrew.

"The clown had a face, not exactly ugly, but mean and depraved. He was clad in a coat suited

to his part, a coat and pantaloons of striped cloth, such as they use to make mattresses, a pointed hat, and red wig.

"The deepest silence suddenly reigned through the auditory. The scene began with a recitative which was sung, interspersed with couplets, long known to the public in the streets and crossways, and called—'*The Merry-andrew's Love.*'

"The clown came forward with a shamefaced aspect, and drawing his leg back, made an awkward bow to Basquine; he then sung what follows, alternately with the girl:

MERRY-ANDREW.—*Mam'selle, c'est moi, j'viens vous parler d'amour.*

BASQUINE (with a pout of disdain).—*De ton amour? Ah! mon pauvre paillasse!*

MERRY-ANDREW (trying to clasp the waist of Basquine, who struggles with him and laughs).—*C'est moi, mam'selle, qui voudrais a mon tour.*

* * * * *

BASQUINE (boxing his ears.)—*Vl'a pour toi, nigaud, tu n'es qu'un grand sot.*

MERRY-ANDREW (crying, bellowing, and clapping his two fists to his eyes, sang in a piteous burlesque voice, in a well known air)—

Hi, hi, hi, hi, mam'selle,
J'connais vot' ficelle,
Vous aimez Arlequin,
Un flaneur, un faquin,
Hier soir, a la brune,
Moi je vous ai bien vu,
Il vous prenait.....

BASQUINE (interrupted him with a shout of laughter, and asked him with roguish impudence).—*Crois—tu?*

* * * * *

"The scene continued in this strain amidst roars of laughter from the crowd.

"These filthy, double meanings basely rhymed, these wretched obscenities were principally intended to serve as a pretext to the *jeux de scene*, or acted indecencies, to the dirty reticences of the Merry-andrew; and to bring out by contrast the juvenile and inciting prettiness of his partner.

"Never had the hideous rapture of the tumbler appeared to me so licentious as on that day: the brazen mien, the obscene gesture, the sparkling eyes; two or three times as he drew towards the girl to take hold of her waist, he had carried his cynical pantomime to such an extent, that some of the by-standers hissed him, whilst the greater number applauded him with boorish revelry.

"I was present, though invisible, at this scene, and was peeping through a hole in one of the canvasses, when I saw Mother Bigbone a few yards off. She could not perceive me. I was alarmed at the look of anger—of ferocious hatred which I read in her face, in spite of her thick coat of flaring rouge; for she was dressed as a *savage woman*. Her eyes glared with gloomy fire; her thick lips, overhung with moustaches, quivered convulsively; once or twice she clenched her enormous fists and stiffened her arms as if about to strike somebody.

"At the first, not for one moment did I suspect that the vindictive Megera, whose lover the Merry-andrew was, could be jealous of that wretch, whose filthy gestures and manners in the scene with Basquine had, however, exasperated even to fury the jealousy of that female Alcides.

"So I did not think of inquiring what could be the cause of this passionate excitement in Mother Bigbone, who, besides, as soon as the scene terminated, suddenly vanished down a ladder from within.

"At that moment I raised one of the flaps of the curtain, drew close to Basquine to greet her, for her success had been glorious, although nothing could be more painful or loathsome than to hear the pure silver voice of that child polluted with the mouldy ribald jests of the rabble.

"And yet such was the charm, the melody, the grace and allurement of her performance, that the repulsive triviality of the scene disappeared. She was greeted with raving applause; the enthusiasm rose up to such a pitch that showers of coppers, and even *white money* fell on all sides of the stage: a largesse the more unhoped for that this scene, solely intended to lure the public inside the booth, had been acted in open air, and was looked upon as gratuitous, and was not to be followed by a collection.

"Immediately after this popular munificence, tempestuous cries of *encore* resounded through the throng.

"Still half-concealed behind the canvass, I had drawn near Basquine, happy and proud to compliment her; for the same thing which now saddens me to think of, then truly delighted me.

"'I hope this is a regular hit!' said I, in a whisper to Basquine, and lifting the canvass.

"'Do n't mention it,' answered the child, full of spirits, and flushed with joy, her cheeks on fire, her eyes glittering; 'it drives me crazy—how funny it is!'

"At that moment the cries of '*Encore! encore!*' were repeated with still more energy.

"Basquine, whose excitement was by that time a little subdued, almost imperceptibly shrugged her shoulders, and pointing to the gaping crowd, said to me in a voice still agitated by recent success:

"Look at the poor devils, how they take fire; but this is nothing. By and bye I 'll set them in a flame.'

"'And I say I 'll strangle you if you play it twice. I won't have that lousy rascal touch you and look at you as he did,' muttered an ominous voice from behind.

"I turned and saw Bamboche; he was pale, and his face was distorted by jealous rage.

"'My God! what can I do? It's in the part,' said Basquine, shaking with fear, as she turned towards the side where Bamboche was hidden by the curtain.

"'Encore! Encore!—the scene between the Merry-andrew and Basquine!' cried the impatient crowd.

"'I forbid you to repeat it,' replied Bamboche, half raising the cloth to dart a fierce and dreadful look at Basquine; 'do you hear me?'

"And again he dropped the curtain.

"'I won't repeat the scene,' whispered the poor creature to me, her eyes streaming with tears; then she added—

"'Go and tell him then not to be angry.'

"At the vociferous uproar made by the crowd, La Levrasse, delighted with his pupil's success, climbed up the platform, and approaching Basquine, said to her in a low voice:

"'The public are on fire. Come, then! what are you about? Make haste to begin the scene.'

"'No,' replied Basquine, resolutely.

"She then made a retrograde move to withdraw behind the canvass.

"The shouts still continuing, La Levrasse bowed three times to the throng with a comical grimace, and made signs that he was trying to persuade her to comply with their request; but in spite of his laughing look, he said to his pupil in an angry tone:

"'Little brat, you will vex the people, and cheat us out of splendid receipts.'

"'I do n't care,' said Basquine, abruptly, and with a look so determined, that the mountebank, no longer hoping to overcome her opposition, added in a whisper:

"'I 'll be even with you for this!'

"Then, resuming his hypocritical grimace, he bowed a second time to the public and said:

"'I will take the liberty to observe to the honourable company that the wonderful child having to appear in other exercises of singing and dancing, she would fatigue herself too much by repeating this scene before the most honourable and respectable company.'

And then as furious shouts of disappointment

were returned to his speech, La Levrasse continued in his shrill voice:

"Let the company be of good heart! nothing will be lost; the exercises shall conclude with the repetition of the famous scene which has so happily excited your admiration.'

"And as this promise, far from pacifying the hungry crowd, was met by fresh clamour, La Levrasse, like a true politician, made a sign to Basquine to withdraw, and told the big drum, the clarionette, and the whole band to strike up fiercely and stun the people.

At this command the infernal band exploded, and the Merry-andrew united the clatter of a monstrous bell to the deafening noise of the orchestra, which soon extinguished the vociferations of the crowd, whilst La Levrasse and the Merry-andrew, leaning over the railing on the platform, cried out:

"'Walk in, ladies and gentlemen, walk in; the trifle at the door is nothing for the sight you will see. Walk in, ladies, and gentlemen, walk in!'

"Notwithstanding his skilful manœuvre, a large number of the spectators were incensed, and rushed against the sides of the booth; a dreadful tumult was the consequence; and it was with some difficulty suppressed by a few *gendarmes*, the necessary adjuncts of our show; but the legal power prevailed. A few amateurs, rather too ardent admirers of Basquine, were arrested, and the inner performance was at length begun in presence of a large assemblage; for this incident very naturally increased the general curiosity.

"I had left the stage outside the booth before Basquine to go and soothe poor Bamboche in his jealousy.

"Just as I was passing along a small slip of canvass behind which was our dressing-room, I overheard the big voice of Mother Bigbone. Though she intended to speak low and strove to control herself, her words reached my ears.

"I stopped short.

"'I tell you again you want to entice her, you scoundrel, and that I will kill her, the little serpent,' muttered the giantess: 'I have long been watching you.'

"'You won't kill any body at all, my fatty; you are not game to do it,' replied the mean husky voice of the clown.

"'I sha'n't kill her, sha'n't I? We shall see. *I can cough*,' said Mother Bigbone, laying a strange stress and accent on the words.

"Then she probably completed the meaning of these words by an expressive gesture; for, after a momentary pause, the Merry-andrew resumed, more seriously:

"'Yes! BY COUGHING; yes, that's possible, but I dare you to do it—you would not be so bold before all the people.'

"There was then a sudden shaking behind the curtain where the speaker stood, so I made off.

"I now understood Mother Bigbone's fit of passion, and was greatly alarmed for Basquine: she had more than once before called me to release her from the brutal behaviour of the clown; and entreated me to say nothing about it to Bamboche, whose jealousy was very soon roused. The poor child had consequently to dread both Mother Bigbone's jealousy and the Merry-andrew's hatred.

"I was on the point of revealing every thing to Bamboche; but recollecting that we were to leave the troop that very night, and seeing nothing more than a distant threat in Mother Bigbone's speech, I thought it prudent to keep silence, as the danger did not appear to me to be imminent.

"I joined Bamboche about the same time as Basquine.

"The poor little girl went up to him, with her hands clasped together, with tearful eyes and supplicating looks, her countenance overspread with an undefinable mixture of deference, fear, and tenderness.

"'Say but the word and I won't appear again this evening,' muttered the child, in a broken voice.

"Then she added more firmly:

"'No, La Levrasse shall tear me to pieces before I will appear again this evening, if you forbid me.'

"'Now, I don't care; you have only to do the feats with me, Martin, and Mother Bigbone,' replied Bamboche, in a voice which he strove to make harsh; but his look—his face—betrayed the deep feeling caused by the devotion and the energetic decision of Basquine.

"And, therefore, desiring to dissemble his emotion, he turned about and said—

"'I am called for.'

"He left us in a hurried manner; but I had already detected the tears in his eyes.

"'Gracious goodness! what more is the matter with him?' said Basquine to me, for she had not been able to observe the softened manner of Bamboche.

"'He is crying, and don't want us to see it,' said I to her.

"'He is crying;—and what for?' she asked.

"'Because he is touched with your promise to him; to stand any risk rather than appear again this evening without his leave.'

"'Oh! see that! see that!—in spite of every thing. How good he is!' exclaimed Basquine, deeply penetrated.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT A WOMAN CAN DO WHEN SHE IS JEALOUS.

"ALL at once, Mother Bigbone entered the tiring-room: she was dressed as a savage, with a coronet of high red and black feathers; she had on a tiger-striped coat, resembling a panther's skin; this garb did not conceal her huge bossy knees, over which was folded a flesh-coloured swaddle. She was pale beneath the thick crust of paint which covered her face: her immense black eyebrows seemed to contrast themselves involuntarily; and I thought she looked ominous.

"These remarks struck me the more, because she spoke to us with unusual kindness.

"'Quick, quick, my children,' said she to us, cordially; 'we have only just time to prepare our *entreé* for the *human pyramid*, of which you shall be the obelisk, my sweet little angel,' said Mother Bigbone smilingly to Basquine, chucking her under the chin and kissing her forehead.

"At that hypocritical caress I shuddered.

"It was evident that the danger I apprehended for Basquine, but which I had looked upon as remote, was at hand; but what could it be?'

"And where is that sly rogue Bamboche?' added Mother Bigbone, gently; 'he will mangle the effect of our entrance.'

"Bamboche,' cried I.

"'Here I am, here I am!' answered my companion running in.

"Bamboche and I were likewise to form a part of the *human pyramid*. We were costumed according to the most authentic tradition of the tumblers,—a salmon-coloured swaddle, investing the whole body; red drawers, puffed out and spangled; red buskins fringed with cat-skin.

"'Come, Basquine; up with you,' said Mother Bigbone, stooping her back and resting her hands upon her knees.

"In a moment Basquine ran nimbly to the top of the monstrous spine presented to her, and then mounting the shoulders,—a real platform to be sure—the child stood up, with her arms crossed, and one foot here—the other there.

"Mother Bigbone then took Bamboche and me each by one hand.

"A flap of the booth was drawn up, and we entered in this manner within the small circus in which we held our performance.

"I soon perceived that Mother Bigbone, who held me, as I said, by the hand, shook and trembled now and then as if under the influence of some violent yet stifled emotion. My alarm for Basquine increased; I raised my eyes directly to the giantess: her big bulky chest heaved so powerfully once or twice beneath the panther's skin, that the impulse extending to her shoulders, the sole support of Basquine's feet, the child was obliged to make one or two almost imperceptible removes in order to recover her equilibrium.

"Then, in an instant, the Merry-andrew's words —*you might kill her by coughing*, recurred to my thoughts.

"Now it was I understood all.

"In order to complete the figure of the human pyramid, Bamboche and I were to take the place of Basquine on Mother Bigbone's shoulders, whilst the child—climbing in her turn upon our shoulders—might stand upright upon them, with her arms crossed over her bosom.

"A sudden move by Mother Bigbone, who supported us all three, was, therefore, sufficient to produce the crash of the human pyramid, and the fall of Basquine; a fall of nine or ten feet at least, which might be mortal, and was undoubtedly most perilous for a child of so tender an age. Now, that unexpected move or jerk Mother Bigbone might with perfect impunity produce by counterfeiting a violent fit of coughing, which, as it suddenly shook her enormous trunk, would make us all three lose our equilibrium, already difficult enough to preserve.

"This chain of reasoning darted through my mind with the rapidity of lightning, at the very moment when Mother Bigbone stood still in the middle of the circus, and Basquine slid to the ground, in order to make room for us to occupy her place on the shoulders of the female colossus.

"To acquaint Bamboche with my fears was impossible: we were still separated by the expanded rotundity of Mother Bigbone. I ought at once to have refused to take part in the figure, in order to render the *human pyramid* incomplete, and thus avert the disaster I was afraid of. But in the midst of my terror and concern, the thought did not occur to me; and, yielding to the mechanical influence of custom (for we had often repeated that exercise), I hoisted myself up on one shoulder of the female Hercules, whilst Bamboche climbed to the other.

"Mother Bigbone, with her back slightly bent—her hands propped upon her haunches—as fixed as a Cariatides of stone—stood up immoveable beneath our double weight. Hardly had she felt our equilibrium, before she said in a low voice to Basquine—

"'Now then—up with you—and be quick.'

"All this passed off with incredible swiftness; for these exercises, which were very fatiguing, and no less critical, never lasted more than a few seconds.

"When I reached Mother Bigbone's shoulder, before I attempted to impart my fears to Bamboche, I was first obliged to find, like him, my equilibrium; and then, with my left arm, I girded the loins of my comrade, whilst he entwined me in the same manner.

"I seized that moment, hardly affording time to breathe, to say to Bamboche in a low voice—

"'Take care of Basquine!'

"'Never fear!' answered he, mistaking it for a mere caution to be careful.

"'No,' said I, earnestly; 'distrust Mother Bigbone—mind!'

"Bamboche did not then attend to me. Basquine, helped herself by the tunic, and even with the knot of hair of Mother Bigbone, to climb to her shoulder, where she rested for a moment behind us. Basquine, at the very moment I was putting Bamboche on his guard, was already setting her little foot in the hollow of my comrade's hand, which he had placed like a footstep against his side; with another light and airy step, she reached Bamboche's shoulder, on which she supported her right foot, whilst she rested with her left upon mine: then, crossing her arms, she saluted the public with a bow full of grace and prettiness.

"At that feat of strength, wonderful address, grace, and intrepidity, a storm of raving *bravos* exploded among the spectators.

"Suddenly, I felt, if I may say as much, by a slow progressive swelling in the shoulders of Mother Bigbone, that the she-devil was preparing to cough with unusual force; and, precisely then, Basquine, excited by the deafening applause which greeted her, took up the attitude of *Fame*, withdrawing her right foot, which was resting on Bamboche, and slowly raising her leg backwards. Thus the poor child had no longer any other support than the end of the foot reposing on my shoulder.

"Urged by instinctive impulse, for I had no time to think or reflect, I suddenly fell back, and extended my arms just at the moment, when Mother Bigbone began to cough with great violence. Basquine, whose only support I was at the time, and who was leaning slightly forward in her attitude, fell in front of me. I had the unspeakable joy, as we both fell together, to catch her in my arms when half way to the ground, and to alight upon my feet as I held her thus entwined.

"At these unexpected motions, Bamboche lost his balance: but, in his case, as in mine, the leap was a trifle without any danger; and he took it nimbly.

"Thus we had all three fallen on our feet. The gaping throng mistook the incident for the natural termination of the exercise, and, delighted with a feat so novel, applauded us to the skies, whilst I carried off Basquine, who was almost senseless with the shock, saying to Bamboche:

"'Come—come along.'

"And we all three vanished behind the flap of the canvass, leaving Mother Bigbone in the midst of her pretended fit of coughing, and so disconcerted by this incident, which had baffled her deadly design, that she stood for a minute or two petrified, and gaping, in her first posture, which drew upon her the hisses of the audience.

"To complete her disappointment, I said instantly to the Provost of the Academies of Saint Petersburg, Persepolis, and Caudebec, who was waiting for his turn to go on and have his bout with the giantess:

"'The order of the entertainment is changed: it 's your turn now. Make haste, Mother Bigbone is waiting for you.'

"I did this for the express purpose of gaining a moment's liberty, and to inform Bamboche and also Basquine, of the danger the latter had escaped.

"Just as I had expected, the Provost hastened to enter the arena, where he immediately made a respectful *salute* in fencing guise to his huge antagonist, in order to propose in a gallant way the trial of arms.

"This Provost was a little, dry, lean, grey-headed man, nimble and frisky, coquetishly attired in his fencing-waistcoat, white trousers, and fine red morocco sandals; no doubt the worthy man could not plume himself on having studied under the illustrious BERTRAND, who (as I heard from one of my masters), has been able to unite the grace and dignity of the classic school to the most desperate passes and lunges of vulgar swordship; he, who has imparted to the weapon a new power, by gifting it with reasoning, thought, and calculation. However, the little Provost had exhibited no lack of grace and spirit when he set himself on his guard

opposite the giantess; but at that moment the Megera, raving with fury to see Basquine escape her vengeance, and glad to have some victim to satiate her wrath, snatched up her mask, glove, and foil, which lay ready on a table, and putting herself in turn upon her defence, began to assail the miserable little Provost with the fury of a whirlwind, without waiting for any of the customary tricks of fence, and driving him home with so desperate a passion that after having broken her foil upon his chest, and finding herself disarmed, the tremendous virago, in her sightless fury, continued the assault with her ponderous fists, so that the fencing bout terminated in a pugilistic encounter.

"It was with much difficulty, and amidst redoubled peals of hilarity, that they rescued the little Provost, torn and marked with many blows, out of the terrible hands of Mother Bigbone; the performances proceeded without any further mishap, and was concluded with the exhibition of the man-fish.

"Leonidas Shark acted his part nobly: he devoured a fine eel alive, a pike weighing two pounds, and a dozen fluttering gudgeons, after having astounded the audience, in his tub, thanks to his fine blue fins with springs, which, artistically soldered to a tin corslet and seen at a distance by the dusky light of our lamps, produced a perfect illusion. Leonidas had, moreover, his head covered with a close skull-cap of blueish colour, on the sides of which had been most ingeniously contrived *fish gills* in cere-cloth, which gave him the strangest aspect imaginable.

"A single incident was well-nigh disturbing this happy illusion; but fortunately there had been a precedent to the case, and the man-fish was on his guard.

"Leonidas Shark had just finished, amidst general applause, eating his last raw gudgeon, and seemed to revel in the retrospect of a meal so much to his taste, sporting with glee in his tub, and playing with his fins like a bird when striking its wings, when a bystander, as indiscreet as he was sceptical, stood up and cried out:

"'I will give ten sous to be allowed to examine and scan the fins of the *gentleman!*'

"This dangerous manifestation of unbelief unluckily was met with an echo, and a round number of the spectators stood up likewise, and exclaimed:

"'So will we—so will we give ten sous to go close up to the bathing-tub.'

"'And handle the fins of the man-fish,' said an obdurate spectator.

"Dreading a sudden rush of inquisitive examiners, the mountebank made a sign to two *gendarmes* who were watching over the performance, and, secure of their support, he said to the public:

"'In the first place, I put the man-fish under the protection of the constabulary force and of the law; for no man is authorised by my posters to go close up to the *phenomenon*, and still less to lay an unholy hand on his fins.'

"Then, put to some degree of shame by the shouts of derision which met this protestation, La Levrasse added with affected dignity:

"'However, to show the respectable company that my phenomenon has nothing to fear from the most scrupulous examination, I accept the proposal of my honoured patrons, but on one condition.'

"'Ah! ah! see that! he lays down a condition,' roared the scepties.

"'Yes, gentlemen, I reserve a condition,' resumed La Levrasse, 'but one that is very simple; it is that only four persons at the utmost, and chosen by the respectable company, shall be suffered to approach the man-fish.'

"'Why only four persons?' cried several voices.

"The mountebank looked bashfully to the ground and continued:

"'Gentlemen, in his sphere as a man-fish, my phenomenon lives naturally in the water, without a particle of clothing; but this habit does not prevent him from being possessed of the most extraordinary and decorous modesty. This modesty is commendable and does him honour; but it is so jealous and shrewish, that I will not even pledge myself that the presence even of four of you, coming—so to speak—to scrutinise my phenomenon, to the very bottom of his tub, will not sensibly wound that delicacy for which I commend him.'

"A deplorable groan from the man-fish seemed to confirm the speech of La Levrasse; but he, turning round to Leonidas, resumed in a grave and serious tone, as if he wished to prepare him for a painful sacrifice of feeling:

"'Never mind, my lad, however painful it may be to our feelings, we must submit to this public investigation: our *tub ought to be made of glass* in order that our *phenomenal* probity might remain unsuspected. So then, resign yourself, my friend; let your modesty sacrifice itself for once.'

"At this speech a new and most piteous groan proceeded from Leonidas, who plunging over his ears into the bathing tub, disappeared altogether.

"'Don't alarm yourselves, gentlemen,' said La Levrasse, with a look of confidence at the audience, who began to be uneasy, 'he will return to the surface of the water to breathe the fresh air, like the whale and other fishes.'

"Then, turning to the *gendarmes*.

"'Gendarmes, allow four of the honoured and respectable company to approach. But I must warn them that I withdraw the permission I have granted, if those honourable persons still persist to pay ten sous for a privilege which I have the honour to grant to them gratuitously.'

"It was impossible to be more spiritedly generous.

"Precisely at the moment the man-fish re-appeared upon the surface of the water, the four umpires, sprang forward and stood ready to fathom with a greedy eye the mystic depths of the tub, when La Levrasse said to them with a gesture of formal gravity:

"'Remember, gentlemen, that I have already told you that the man-fish is excessively modest.'

"'What do we care for that?' returned one of the examiners.

"'I can say no more,' answered the mountebank, sententiously. 'Now, gentlemen, you have your warning; let your curiosity be satisfied, since so you require.'

"'As soon as the four inquisitive simpletons had drawn close up to my tub,' said the man-fish to me, when relating the scene, 'I assumed the manners of offended modesty, shaking and tossing about in my vessel like a Naiad sporting with a voluptuous stream; but, just at the moment when, leaning over the edge of the butt, my four explorers put their hands above their eyes the better to see, I moved slightly, and, behold! the water, so clear and pellucid before, suddenly turned as black as ink, and moreover emitted a sulphureous smell so atrociously pestiferous, that the four umpires, nearly suffocated, and tumbling backwards on each other and stopping up their noses, made a precipitate retreat, looking at each other, whilst La Levrasse exclaimed:

"'It 's his modesty that is offended, gentlemen; I told you how it would be;—it 's his offended modesty. For like the fish that when flying from the shark, has the property of protecting itself by means of a black liquid which darkens the water and arrests the pursuit of his formidable foe, the man-fish, in order to escape those prying eyes which too deeply wound his modesty, has the gift of mantling himself in a cloud which——'

"The mountebank had not time to expatiate more amply on the properties of my cloud; for the stench of twenty Barege-baths would have seemed

like roses and jassmines when compared with the vapour which rose up from my butt. I was almost stifled by it myself; but I had the satisfaction of seeing the mob of spectators rush to the door without waiting out the play, and fairly punished for having wanted to examine my fins too closely by that commission of four stupid umpires. I need not tell you, my dear Martin, that foreseeing the desperate case of one day requiring some appropriate means to baulk the critical curiosity of the public, I had concealed at the bottom of my tub, a large bladder filled with lamp-black diluted, and a strong dose of the most subtile and infectious combinations of sulphureous hydrogen, and such like abominable substances. By driving a nail through that bladder the horrid fumes arose which had dispersed my examiners. I have employed other contrivances before on a like occasion, which darkened the water, and to mystify the prying portion of an audience; but there is nothing equal to the bladder, which drives the people away at once, and after the performance there remain no loiterers to peep at me through the corner of their eyes by hanging about my tub.'

* * * * * *

"At nine o'clock that evening, when the last lights in our booth were extinguished, we got ready for supper.

"Bamboche, who had no doubt purposely affected not to be seen near me, said to me in a low and hurried voice:

"'All goes well! every thing is ready; we shall cut away to-night.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE DIABOLICAL SNARE SET BY THE MOUNTEBANK TO ENTRAP THE UNSUSPICIOUS BASQUINE, AND THE WARM CORRECTION HE RECEIVES FROM THE STOUT-HEARTED LITTLE BAMBOCHE.

"THE ground which had been granted us for the exhibition of our show, lying at a short distance beyond the last house of Senlis, we encamped as usual in the wandering vehicle.

"Although our receipts had been very large, the supper after the performance was dull and constrained. The night was magnificent: we supped beneath our tent. Mother Bigbone, inwardly angry no doubt, to have lost the opportunity of killing or mortally wounding Basquine, by making her fall from the height of the human pyramid, sat there in silence, casting now and then a savage scowl at the clown. The latter was drinking copiously, but his customary babble, so filthy and obscene, was that evening almost extinct. The man-fish, bashful as usual, was eating quietly, squeezing himself up in order not to disturb any one, endeavouring to escape notice, so as to elude the usual coarse vulgarities of the Merry-andrew.

"La Levrasse seemed profoundly thoughtful; although he was generally of a sober habit, he kept drinking his wine, glass after glass; several times I caught his eye, glaring and ardent, wandering to Basquine; with an expression which made me shudder, whilst our pretty little companion, in obedience to the secret instructions she had received from Bamboche, strove to put on an air of petulant exhilaration of spirits; but these bursts of fictitious gaiety only served to conceal the anguish which we all three felt, whilst we reflected that this was the night we were to forsake the troop for ever.

"Bamboche, on the contrary, affected the most peevish ill-humour. He spoke but little; and during the whole meal he yawned and stretched himself, pretended to be very tired, and at length when he thought that nobody saw him, he got up from the table, looking significantly at me; but just as he passed behind La Levrasse's chair, the mountebank, who had not seemed to pay attention to Bamboche, stopped him abruptly and said:

"'Where are you going?'

"'To bed: I can't stand it any longer.'

"'We must all go to bed together,' added La Levrasse, in a derisive tone; 'stay where you are.'

"'It's all one to me,' said Bamboche; 'I will lie down on the ground; for I shall sleep there just as well: you can rouse me after supper.'

"Thereupon he stretched himself along one of the cloth partitions of our booth, which separated it from a compartment used as a stable for the mountebank's large black donkey.

"'Mind, Lucifer, you don't kick me through the cloth,' said Bamboche, pretending to give way to sleep, and he settled himself as comfortably as possible to enjoy his rest.

"Basquine stole at me a look of despair; Bamboche had already told us that, on pretence of retiring to rest, he would leave the table before supper was half-finished, in order to go and complete some indispensable preparations for our flight, and warning us not to be uneasy at his absence; but when we saw him stopped by La Levrasse, we thought it was all up. I imagined our master had either surprised or divined our design, and that some spiteful trap had been set for us.

"Soon my fears redoubled; for, a moment after, La Levrasse took a small account-book out of his pocket, wrote a few words on it in pencil, and, tearing off the leaf, passed it to Mother Bigbone over the man-fish's head.

"Mother Bigbone took the paper without reading it, and looked at La Levrasse with some astonishment.

"'Children cannot understand these tricks,' said he to her, casting a strange look at Basquine.

"Mother Bigbone read; and immediately a hellish look of joy broke over her face, and she cried out:

"'Be it so.'

"Then handing the paper to the Merry-andrew, she said him in a voice of fierce defiance:

"'And you—how do you like it?'

"'Why, very much,' replied the clown, with a hideous laugh, after he had read it. 'There's always enough left for another.'

"'Yes,' cried the angry Jezabel; 'but here am I.'

"'In one word, is it agreed?' replied La Levrasse, apparently disregarding the remarks of the giantess.

"'Yes, agreed,' replied she.

"'Agreed,' said the clown.

"And after returning the paper to La Levrasse, he chanted out in his husky voice the popular air of '*L'Enfant do, l'enfant do, l'enfant dormira tantôt.*'

"Then he laughed aloud, whilst the crafty mountebank burnt the leaf by the flame of the lamp.

"I exchanged a furtive glance with Basquine; I saw that, like me, she feared lest the mysterious discourse we had just heard might conceal some new peril that threatened us, and related to the discovery of our intended flight.

"I looked instinctively at the spot where Bamboche had lain down; he was gone, having certainly crept under the curtain which divided us from the black donkey's stable.

"Had Bamboche vanished thus before or after the reading of the leaf handed by the mountebank to his accomplices? I could not tell, and my anxiety redoubled.

"Suddenly La Levrasse poured himself out a bumper of wine, made a sign to Mother Bigbone and the clown to do the same; and then, when the glasses were filled, he exclaimed in a sinister voice:

"'Let us drink *Kitten's health!*'

"This toast was greeted with thunders of laughter, and those peals had in them a strange sound of treachery that boded no good.

"Mother Bigbone, then getting up from table, said, in her big hoarse voice:

"Come, Bamboche, Basquine, Martin, to bed, to bed, ye devil's cubs.'

"'Are you deaf then, you?' said La Levrasse, stooping at the spot where shortly before he had seen Bamboche extend himself.

"'Nay! he has cut,' said La Levrasse, surprised, 'Bamboche is not there.'

"'Well! so much the better,' cried Mother Bigbone, as if struck with some sudden idea: 'if he has gone into the carriage we must put him out; and, to punish him, let him sleep under the moon.'

"'Yes—yes,' said La Levrasse, exchanging looks of mutual understanding with the giantess, 'that's it; the rascal shall sleep in the open air.'

"'Nor shall he have any sugared wine like Basquine and Martin, before he lies down,' added Mother Bigbone.

"'I have searched the three compartments of the carriage,' said the clown, returning after a few minutes' absence, 'Bamboche is not there.'

"Saying which, I thought I saw the Merry-andrew deliver a small parcel to the giantess.

"'Well, it is understood, since Bamboche plays us a prank,' said La Levrasse, 'it must be a good one, and it shall last till morning.'

"Every moment I expected to see our companion appear; but he came not.

"To believe that he was forsaking us and flying alone, was out of the question. He had certainly told us that this very night we were to escape; but, as for the means of flight, we knew nothing about them, and we only expected him to explain them at the moment of flight.

"We had all stood up from table when Mother Bigbone had said, 'To bed.'

"After speaking for a few seconds aside to the old shrew, at the entrance of the booth, La Levrasse called the clown and said something to him in the same low voice.

"As these three personages stood in the shade, I could not descry their actions; but still I thought I heard the clash of two bottles, the one against the other.

"In the mean time the man-fish, who had hitherto appeared completely a stranger to what was passing, went to and fro, as he was accustomed to do, to gather up and put by the plates, dishes, &c.

"Basquine drew close to me and whispered in a tremulous voice:

"Bamboche does not come—where can he be—what's to be done?'

"'I don't know,' said I, in terror.

"'Don't drink any negus; and beware of this

night,' softly and hurriedly whispered the man-fish as he passed by the side of us, laden with a heap of utensils.

"'Come, little brats, to your sty,' cried Mother Bigbone. 'So much the worse for that rascal Bamboche: let him sleep with Lucifer if he likes.'

"A few minutes after, our lamps were extinguished and laid by in a strong chest, along with our plates and dishes; nothing was left outside save our booth, a few chairs, our trestles, and Lucifer, who two or three times fell a braying most violently. We all returned into the carriage to pass the night in it as usual.

"That enormous vehicle, a true locomotive house, and very solidly constructed, was divided into three parts: the ware-room in front, separated by a door from the dressing-room, which was in the middle; another door separated the dressing-room from the cabin. There was but one entrance to it, and that was at the back; small grated loop holes, admitted both light and air; the entrance-door was strongly bolted by La Levrasse, who said afterwards to Basquine and me, as he led us into the middle chamber or dressing-room:

"'As you have worked rather hard to-day, my little loves, and must needs require a good night's rest, instead of sleeping in the cabin with us all, you shall lie by yourselves—but each of you apart the better to accommodate you both: you, my little Martin, in the ware-room in front—you, Basquine, here in the dressing-room. Moreover, as you have been very good, you shall, before you go to your rest, drink a large glass of negus, with cinnamon; and that will make you sleep like two little dormice, and will refresh your limbs and loins for the performances to-morrow. Look at the dainty things; how their mouths water already.'

"Then turning to the cabin:

"'Well, Mother Bigbone, is the negus ready?'

"'In a minute, my man; I am melting the sugar.'

"'Come, go into your room, little Martin,—I will bring you your negus presently,' said La Levrasse, opening the door leading to the ware room.

"'There is a mattress on the ground; you can stretch yourself on it, and sleep like a king.'

"There was no eluding the order, or refusing compliance; I obeyed mechanically, and glancing dismayedly at Basquine, was going in, when suddenly Mother Bigbone opened the cabin door, and said to La Levrasse:

"'Come here, my man: Longleak has such a capital thought.'

"Hereupon the mountebank left us alone, and, re-entering the cabin, closed the dressing-room door behind him.

"'We won't drink any negus, and you must not leave me alone to-night,' cried Basquine; and pale, quaking with fear, her lovely face in disorder, she flung her arms round me, saying:

"'Oh! I am so afraid.'

"Without answering her, I ran and drove the strong bolt into its cleft, to secure the door against La Levrasse.

"My hand was still on the bolt when the mountebank, wanting to return into the room, cried out in a tone of anger and surprise:

"'What! have you bolted the door?'

"Panting, and in the utmost dread, neither of us answered.

"'Come, come,' said La Levrasse, in a softer tone, 'open the door, you little sly ones. This day seems set apart for frolic. Bamboche has hidden himself, and you two have shut yourselves in It 's very droll, and very amusing, I allow, but the joke must not continue too long. Come, come, let me in; here 's your negus.'

"'Do n't open,' said Basquine, more and more terrified, for the poor child understood what, in my simplicity, I did not.

"'Let them burst in the door if they choose—let them even kill me; fortunately Bamboche has escaped,' cried she, in her excitement.

"'Martin—Basquine! open the door, I say,' cried La Levrasse, shaking it with violence.

"All at once, several low and heavy strokes were heard outside near the entrance-door of the vehicle.

"Then I heard from the cabin the voice of Mother Bigbone saying to La Levrasse:

"'Hark! somebody knocks at the entrance-door.'

"'It 's that scoundrel Bamboche, who wants to be let in,' said the clown; 'never mind him, he sha'n't come in.'

"'Bamboche is there—we are saved,' cried Basquine, with a glow of hope beaming in her face, and squeezing my hands in her own.

"'Open the door, will you?' at length roared La Levrasse, in a rage; 'or shall I burst it in?'

"'Bamboche is there; let us gain time,' said I to Basquine, somewhat re-assured.

"Then the child signed to me to be silent, and replied as she struggled to dissemble her alarm:

"'Who knocks?'

"'A pretty question to ask who knocks—why, I do, La Levrasse.'

"'I will open the door presently,' said Basquine.

"'Why not now?'

"'Because——'

"'Because, what?'

"'Because I want to teaze you,' answered she, assuming a gayer tone of voice.

"'Ah! it 's only a jest, then? I thought so,' answered La Levrasse; 'but my dear girl, the joke is growing very tedious, so let me in.'

"'Are we really going to have some negus?' replied Basquine.

"'Why have I not got two large glasses in my hand—one for you, and the other for Martin? you little she-devil.'

"During this colloquy, I had hoisted myself up to one of the windows of the carriage, and was trying to see or hear Bamboche; to my utter surprise I smelt a strong odour of sulphur, and through the darkness of the night, I perceived a light—small at first, but which rapidly expanding, soon shed its reddish glare over the white canvass of our booth.

"Making but one leap from the chair on which I was standing, I was going to tell Basquine what I had observed outside, *when suddenly a piece of the floor was detached almost under our feet, and leaving an opening of about eighteen inches square, up rose the head and shoulders of Bamboche.*

"'Quick!' said he, 'come along!'

"And then the resolute boy disappeared to make room for us.

"'Go you first,' said I to Basquine.

"In less than a minute she, too, had vanished through the trap-hole.

"Just as I followed Basquine, the door shook on its hinges beneath the furious efforts of La Levrasse, and almost at the same instant the thundering voice of Mother Bigbone cried out with affright:

"'Fire! fire! Help! help!

"When, after walking on in a stooping posture through several trusses of straw, intended for Lucifer's litter, I came out from beneath the carriage almost at the same time as Basquine. I was dazzled by a large flame shining on my left, and which spread its light to some distance over the country.

"Close before me I saw Bamboche, holding in his hand a lighted torch of twisted straw.

"To take me by the arm with his other hand, pull me suddenly away, and fling his brand into the litter scattered beneath the vehicle we had just quitted, it took Bamboche but a moment to perform.

"The fire, inflated by the draught coming from the hole by which we had escaped, began to spread with most alarming rapidity, and the carriage was soon engulphed in fire, both within and without; for the bold and determined boy, thirsting for re-

venge, had already piled up several trusses of straw along the entrance-door, the only issue by which the inmates of the carriage could escape.

"'Fire,' cried I, when I was able to speak; for all this had passed with the speed of electricity.

"'Yes, fire!' said Bamboche to me, pale, and all his features contracted with a look of fierce and savage delight.

"'Yes—fire—they shall roast in that furnace like demons as they are, for they are shut up in the cabin; the door of the dressing-room is bolted, *and I have nailed up the entrance-door outside.*'

"'Oh! how they cry and shriek; do you hear them?' said Basquine, as frightened as myself by the howlings which proceeded from the carriage, the floor of which had caught.

"'Presently their cries will cease,' said Bamboche.

"Then he added quickly:

"'Now to horse on Lucifer; in two hours we shall be in the woods: I know the way.'

"'What! all three of us on Lucifer's back?' exclaimed I. 'Impossible; do you get up with Basquine: I will endeavour to follow you.'

"'Will you obey me,' cried Bamboche in a stunning voice.

"He then turned me face-about, and in a manner pitched me a-straddle on Lucifer, already bridled and saddled; and the donkey, frightened by the flames, snorted, dropped his ears, kicked the earth, and tried to burst the halter which held him fastened to a post.

"'You are lighter than I,' said Bamboche to me, 'stay there; you shall take Basquine before you: she can hold you by the waist, and I will get up behind; quick—quick.'

"Basquine, light as any bird, was by one leap seated in front of me.

"The shrieks of the wretched victims locked up in the carriage were becoming frightful.

"Bamboche, with one stroke of his knife, cut the thong by which Lucifer was bound. The terrified beast made a spring and started off like an arrow; and at the same moment, Bamboche, leaping up behind me, cried out:

"'Let Lucifer go: his back is to the fire. He's in the right road.'

"Our weight was nothing for that large animal, with his wonderful strength; but had we been three times as heavy he would have sped away with the same velocity, thanks to his terror at the flames.

"Squeezing the donkey's crupper tightly between his knees, and smartly digging his heels into his sides, Bamboche turned his head and body round to fling back one last cry of hatred, vengeance, and execration, on the burning vehicle, already far behind us; and, extending his arm and clenched fist, he roared out:

"'I waited for a long while, you scoundrels: but my turn has come at last.'

"And on we went, through the dark night, lighted here and there for a moment by the sparks emitted from the stones beneath the raging gallop of our steed,—a maddened strain which Bamboche still accelerated by cutting with his knife along the flanks of Lucifer.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST ADVENTURES OF BAMBOCHE, MARTIN, AND BASQUINE, AFTER THEIR ESCAPE, AND THE LITTLE ISLAND WHICH THEY DISCOVERED AND TOOK POSSESSION OF.

"LEAVING behind us the burning carriage, we had galloped on during the whole night nearly.

"Shortly before day-break, Lucifer, whose strength was exhausted, and who was completely foundered, had fallen down; we could not force him on his legs again; we waited for the light in the midst of the woods, which we had been several hours travelling through: we were all mad with joy; the expression of terror and pity combined, which Bamboche's dreadful vengeance had inspired both in Basquine and me, soon vanished as we recalled to mind the ill-treatment we had been subject to; and these awful reprisals, with which, besides, we were not connected, appeared to us to be deserved.

"In the intoxication of our deliverence, we built twenty projects, equally wild and impracticable; at length we were about to taste all the joys, all the sweets of a free, rich, and idle life,—for we were rich, enormously rich, according to Bamboche, whom we took care not to contradict; and as soon as the day should break he was to display his treasure to us.

"This unexpected wealth surprised us, and delighted us; but what affected us chiefly—Basquine and I—was the happiness of being the absolute masters of our own will, and of freely disposing of those days which we were going to spend so gaily together.

"Bamboche, resolute and decisive in his views, promised an endless list of fine dresses to Basquine, and spoke just as warmly of the constant feasts and guzzlings we should indulge in. He also mentioned a splendid gold watch which he intended to buy for me. It was in vain I declined the present—he persisted to press me to receive it. That fine jewel was to be set off with a chain, adorned with American gewgaws; and on the back of the case were to be engraved these words: '*Given by Bamboche and Basquine to their brother Martin.*' I could not resist this last trait, so I accepted the watch.

"Bamboche likewise revelled in his description of his own costume and mine, for we were always to be dressed alike, as two brothers; my friend purposed clothing us in blue bottle coats, scarlet waistcoats, tight chamois-leather pantaloons, and hessian boots with tassels to them: the question as to whether these last should be in black or gold was debated at full length. Basquine, with unusual taste for her age, settled it that they should be in black. This costume was to be alternately relieved by another consisting of a green Polish surtout with black cross straps and fur collar, a military kind of vestment, the dashing appearance of which was to be completed by grey trousers with a broad scarlet band at the seams.

"As for Basquine's finery, it was made up of feathers, satins, velvets, and jewels. We were also, of course, to set up a coach.

"Day broke upon us in the midst of these fine dreams; it was then the time for Bamboche to fulfil his promise by showing us our enormous wealth.

"We were seated at the foot of a large tree in the forest; a few steps from us lay the dead black donkey Lucifer; Bamboche went up to him and took off his pack-saddle—to which they were strongly fastened—a couple of bags, which, in the fear and hurry of our flight I had not once noticed.

"Bamboche brought us these two leather bags with much gravity; whilst we ardently longed to look at their contents.

"Bamboche undid the covering at the top of the first bag, and pulled out, to our surprise, and rather to our disappointment, a pair of pistols and a powder-horn.

"'Is that all?' cried Basquine amazed;—'is that our wealth?'

"'That was the means of protecting it last night, if that ruffian La Levrasse had escaped from his oven to run after us.'

"'Good,' replied Basquine; 'now show us our riches—quick—let us see them.'

"'Here they are,' said Bamboche in triumph,

pulling out of the bag a small leather pouch about the size of a lady's reticule, and mounted with a silver clasp, grown black and rusty with age.

"'Weigh that for me, Basquine,' said Bamboche; —'weigh that for me, Martin.'

"Basquine and I put our hands underneath the pouch; it was very heavy.

"'What, is this bag all full of silver?' said Basquine.

"'Of silver!' replied Bamboche, shrugging his shoulders disdainfully:—'silver, indeed! where would be the use of that?'

"Then taking out a small key from his pocket, he handed it to me, and said:

"'Brother Martin, open it.'

"I put the key into the small lock of the fastening, and the lid of the pouch flew up.

"'Take out a *rouleau*,' said Bamboche.

"I therefore took out one at a venture: it was three inches long, neatly folded in paper, and sealed at one end, but only folded over at the other.

"'Look into that rouleau,' said Bamboche to me.

"I opened the paper, and cried out:

"'Gold!'

"'Gold?' repeated Basquine in turn:—'is all that gold?'

"'Take another rouleau,' said Bamboche to me, with a glow of radiant satisfaction.

"I gave Basquine the one I held, and took out a second.

"'Gold again,' said I.

"'Nothing but gold!' said Bamboche, delighted: —'nothing but gold. You might go on looking till to-morrow. These *rouleaus* are full of it. I have not had time to count them; but there must be, I should say, from fifteen to twenty thousand francs.'

"'Fifteen or twenty thousand francs!' exclaimed I, astounded.

"Suddenly Basquine began to laugh so loudly, whilst looking at the rouleau in her hand, that Bamboche and I cried out:

"'What are you laughing at?'

"'Oh! what a good trick,' replied Basquine, with increasing hilarity. 'Do you know what sort of gold you have got, Bamboche? It's all lead. See, look.'

"And, holding out her little hand, she showed us a quantity of round lead pieces of the same size as a franc.

"In the midst of them lay the piece of gold so bright which I had seen on opening the rouleau.

"Bamboche turned ghastly pale, and stood for a moment petrified. Then, seizing the bag at the bottom, he emptied it on the grass.

"About fifteen rouleaus fell out.

"Bamboche knelt down, and tore them all open.

"Alas! they all contained the round flat pieces of lead, like the first; and four or five of them only contained the louis-d'or at the mouth of the rouleau.

"As soon as Bamboche knew for certain, that our colossal fortune was really limited to three or four louis-d'ors, he cried out in a rage:

"'That scoundrel La Levrasse!'

"'What?' said I.

"'Why yes!' replied he, kicking the ground with fury, "I knew that he had a good deal of money hidden somewhere; for six months I was on the watch, for I would not leave the ruffian without being revenged, and without rifling him of the means of making merry. At length, the day before yesterday, I discovered his hiding place.—I got every thing ready to roast La Levrasse, whilst I carried off his treasure; and, now that treasure proves to be a heap of lead, save a poor hundred francs. Oh, the vile, mean beggar!'

"After the first shock was over, caused by our disappointment, we strove in vain to guess for what reason La Levrasse had prepared this lure.

"Since better informed, I am now certain that the mountebank united to his other hazardous trades, that of occasionally lending himself as an accessory to that theft latterly so well known, but at that time new, and mostly successful and unpunished, called the *American exchange*. This bag had no doubt been prepared for some time back by him, to take in some dupe in due season.

"During several minutes, we were lost in amazement to see all our fine projects overturned.

"Basquine was the first to break silence, and said gaily:

"'Psha! what matter! we are as free as the birds—the weather is splendid, these woods are very pretty, and with four or five louis-d'ors we can't starve. Let us walk on, and be merry. We can go and drink some milk in a village; and you, Bamboche, don't be cast down,' added she clinging to his neck.

"But pushing her rudely away, he exclaimed:

"'Let me alone—I am not in a humour to laugh.'

"Basquine's face sunk directly; she looked at Bamboche sadly and timidly, and said in a soft gentle voice to him.

"'Do n't be angry.'

"'To have thought ourselves so rich!' replied he with bitter anger.

"'Hear me, Bamboche,' said I to him, 'if it is on your own account that you regret your treasures, well and good; fret and fume as much as you like; but if it is on mine, do n't worry yourself; it is happiness enough to be free, and all three together.'

"'Martin is right, Bamboche," said Basquine timidly; "we are free and together, never mind the money; it is not I that regret it at all events; and then,' added she with tremulous hesitation, 'as it is, we have not stolen, which is better you know, Bamboche, not to have stolen.'

"'True,' added I. 'As for the few louis-d'ors, we have richly earned them, I hope, for La Levrasse never gave us a penny all the time we tortured ourselves in his service; and yet he got plenty of money by us.'

"'What do I care if it is a theft?' returned Bamboche fiercely, 'and as the Rump-in-the-Bowl used to say, since people do n't give me anything, I must take what I can. That 's what the wolves do; nobody gives them anything, and they take all they find. Besides to rob a thief is no theft, and La Levrasse was a thief.'

"'In short, since we have only taken what was due to us, Basquine is right; it is all the better so,' said I to Bamboche. 'As for the treasure, it's all the same to us to be without it. Did you care so much to possess it, you?'

"'Thunder of heaven! yes, I did care, on your account as well as mine!' cried Bamboche.

"'But to us it do n't matter at all——'

"'But it does matter to me though,' replied Bamboche abruptly.

"So then Basquine and I are nothing to you, for you think of nothing but the lost money,' said I to our comrade; 'you are not just, either.'

"Bamboche was sensible to this reproach; and giving a lusty kick to the empty pouch and the bags, he sent them flying, and then returned gaily:

"'Psha! so much the worse—you are right, you two. If I were to sit here all day brooding over it, what could I do? we have been tricked, what of it? Come, kiss me, Basquine, and you too, Martin; let us pick up the *yellows*; so good luck! and long life to the rovers!'

"We all three embraced in mock-serious fashion, like the three liberators of Switzerland, and repeated: 'Good luck and long life to the rovers.'

"'It's something to stay our appetite, provided they are good, though.'

"So leaving behind us the dead donkey Lucifer, we set forward at random, in the midst of the forest of Chantilly, the most admirable of all forests, on a fine, mild morning in autumn.

"After a progress of two or three hours, inter-

mingled with several stops and loiterings to gather wild mulberries, of a dark purple colour, sweet and savoury, chance conducted us to the bank of a small river, on the side of which grew many watery plants, above which were buzzing, glittering and flying about, myriads and myriads of insects of all hues and colours,—among others the magnificent dragon-fly with its double wings of gauze, its emerald frame, and ruby eyes.

For some time we diverted ourselves with running after those gaudy insects with the delirious joy of our age. To my great surprise, Bamboche showed the same ardour as Basquine and I in this chase; I never could have believed him to be capable of taking so much pleasure in such an amusement.

"My astonishment increased when I saw his face, generally so harsh and stiff, and impressed with an air of precocious manhood, distend by degrees, divest itself of that sarcastic and angry look which was unnatural to his age, and beam with all the candid joy of childhood as he prospered in the chase; *one would have thought that his premature perverseness was beginning to pass away in the free air of solitude and liberty.*

"'It's strange,' said he stopping, and allowing Basquine to play and run before us: 'the sight of this forest, the glorious sun, and the grand silence around us remind me of my former happy days, when, in my childhood, I worked with my poor father in the woods.'

"As he said this, Bamboche was evidently melted; but, that moment descrying a superb dragon-fly perched on the top of a reed, he exclaimed:

"'That's mine.'

"And he started off in pursuit of it.

"As for Basquine, the expression of her charming face, now almost transformed, sometimes reminded me of her candid countenance, when still retaining the innocence and purity of an angel, she related to me, during her illness, her simple faith in the good Virgin, that holy mother of God.

"Thus strolling along, we went up the course of that little streamlet as far as to a spot where it divided itself into two branches to encircle an island which was so small that it did not appear to comprehend more than an acre of ground: it was very steep and precipitous, and immense trees grew up out of the heaps of grey rocks whose base was washed by the river.

"At the sight of that spot so wild, so picturesque, we stood still with admiration and eager curiosity.

"'Oh! what a pretty little island,' cried Basquine clapping her hands; 'how pretty it must be inside.'

"'We must go to it,' said Bamboche, resolutely.

"'And spend the day there,' added I. 'There must be mulberries in it, as well as in the woods: we can dine upon them.'

"'You must not forget the chesnuts,' continued Bamboche, pointing to some gigantic chesnut-trees, growing among the rocks of the island. 'We will eat some chesnuts roasted in ashes—how delightful. To the island then!' cried he with a conqueror's look. 'Follow me to the island! to the island!'

"'Where shall we find any fire to bake the chesnuts?' asked Basquine.

"'Have n't I got my flint? We shall be sure to find some dead branches—I answer for every thing else,' added he with a look of importance. 'I know what forest life is, when I wrought with my father, I always lit the fire. So come—let's be off to the island.'

"'Very good,' said I. 'But to get across the river, which may be too deep for us, what shall we do? And then, there's Basquine.'

"'Make yourselves easy,' said Bamboche, 'I can swim, I will sound the passage. If there is a ford we will carry Basquine over in our arms, if not I am strong enough to take you both over in turns. It's not at all wide, you see.'

"And so saying, he took off his blouse and his shirt, pulled his trousers over his knees and took off his shoes.

"'Take care,' said Basquine to him, alarmed.

"'Never fear,' replied Bamboche, cutting himself a long alder stick.

"'You need not be afraid,' said I to Basquine; 'I have seen him swim—he swims very well.'

"Bamboche went boldly into the water, and felt the bottom of the river with his stick as he advanced.

"It is impossible to describe our joy when we saw him reach the opposite bank, the water not rising above his waist.

"'It's all fine sand,' cried he to us; 'wait a moment, I am coming back: Martin and I will take you in our arms—Basquine you need not be afraid.'

"So said, so done. This streamlet was at most fifteen feet across; we soon got all three merrily into the island, and began to climb the lumps of rock which lay scattered over almost the whole of it, and among which sprang up firs, oaks, and enormous chesnut-trees.

"Excepting a little path, hardly trodden at all, which we met with after a moment or two, and which winding through blocks of grey stone, there was no determined road; tall wild grass grew apace on some spots of vegetable earth; ten minutes after, our path led us to the front of a tenantless ruined house, without any door or windows to it, and yet only recently deserted; for, on the side we arrived at, there was a patch of ground still planted with potatoes and other culinary roots; several old pear-trees laden with a prodigious quantity of fruit, were scattered over the little vegetable garden, whilst a superb trellis covered with grapes of a blue purple colour, entirely garnished one of the gable-ends of the crumbling pile.

"Neither seeing nor hearing any one, we entered the house consisting of two small chambers, without any furniture whatever; in one of these stood a large chimney blackened by the smoke. This dwelling had no doubt been inhabited of late by some forester, appointed to guard the island, for numerous herds of stags and hinds, came to drink and wash themselves in the rivulet, and would occasionally pass through that lonely isle.

"Delighted with our discovery, we went round the house; the other front looked upon a green lawn, much longer than it was wide, edged round with pieces of grey rock, crowned with so fine a set of chesnut-trees, that these secular trees nearly constituted an arbour, as they interwove their branches almost from one side of the lawn to the other.

"Hard by the ruined pile, a small spring gushed out from the hollow of a rock, and falling from shelf to shelf in lessening cascades, dropped at length with a murmuring sound into a natural basin overspread with wild cresses, whence it lost itself afterwards through some channel underground.

"'If we see nobody in this island,' cried Bamboche, 'I propose that we take up our quarters here for a day or two. There are water, potatoes, chesnuts, grapes, and pears: we shall live like princes.

"'I vote that we spend a week here,' cried Basquine, in ecstasy.

"'Let us stay here till we get tired,' added I.

"'So be it,' said Bamboche; 'but first we must certainly make sure that there is nobody here to dislodge us and turn us out.'

"'Alas! that's true—we might be turned out,' replied Basquine sorrowfully—'what a pity!'

"'We won't fret before-hand,' said I. 'Let us begin by rummaging the whole island: we sha'nt be long about it.'

"And truly we had soon done so.

"In another hour we had ascertained that there

were none but ourselves to be found in what, from that time, we called *our island*.

"At eventide, a little before sunset, Basquine was kneeling by the little clear basin of a spring at the foot of a rock, and washing some fine yellow potatoes, whilst Bamboche, seated beside her, was shelling chesnuts; as for me, stooping over the hearth of the ruin, I was blowing a fire made of dry wood, to bake the potatoes and the chesnuts, which were to complete our supper, consisting as it did already of splendid bunches of grapes, and a dozen pears of magnificent size and colour.

"Such was the course of the first day's adventure in OUR ISLAND.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW REMORSE ENTERED THE HEARTS OF THE THREE LITTLE VAGRANTS AND MADE THEM REPENT OF THEIR PREMATURE TRANSGRESSIONS.

"Two days had scarcely elapsed in the tranquil solitude of *our island*, before these symptoms of moral improvement which I had before remarked in my two companions and myself began to manifest themselves more and more.

"Was it, if the expression be allowed, the *change of air?* I cannot tell: but one would have thought that since we had left La Levrasse and the corrupting atmosphere in which we had hitherto existed, our aspirations every day became better and purer.

"Still, we carefully concealed at first the one from the other these propitious and wholesome feelings: for alas! *we were already, at that tender age, so far gone in corruption that we were ashamed of good.*

"The circumstances of the second evening passed in the island are among my most vivid recollections.

"We had worked diligently and joyfully the whole day in raking *our* potatoes and other roots, choked up with weeds; we had picked up dry wood for our fire, and I, as an *old bricklayer*, had settled a few tiles over the roof, whilst Bamboche and Basquine were gathering fruit: so great had been the charm we felt in these labours that we had not rested for two hours.

"After merrily supping on our baked potatoes and savoury fruit, we had lain down, Basquine, Bamboche, and I, on the lawn which expanded before the house.

"The sun had already set some time before: the evening was delightfully mild; and, although there was no moon as yet, the stars glittered so brightly as to shed a feeble light over the darkness. Not a breath of wind could be felt; the air was so pure, so calm, so still, that, amidst the bubblings of the spring gliding among the rocks, we could distinguish a thousand various sounds; some murmuring and low like a complaint,—others clear and silvery, like the reverberation of a glass bell.

"Contrary to our custom, we remained silent and thoughtful.

"'How pretty it is to hear the sound of that spring,' said Basquine, all at once.

"'Yes,' replied Bamboche; 'that's what I was thinking of just then: it is pleasanter than the band which played to our exercises.'

"'Indeed, that's very true!' said I with a sigh.

"And again we all three relapsed into silence.

"Soon after, the song—I do n't know of what bird—a plaintive song it was, and monotonous too, but infinitely sweet, arose at a distance, and was repeated several times, at intervals.

"Then the bird ceased.

"Again we heard the bubble of the little spring, and nothing else.

"That song, so sad, so low, and so solitary, occasioned in me an inexplicable feeling of tenderness,

"'Hark! the bird has left off singing,' said Bamboche in a tone of regret. 'I 'm sorry for it: what say you, Basquine?'

"She did not answer directly.

"'No,' answered she gently: 'I am weeping.

"'Why so?'

"'I do n't know: I am quite well. I feel very happy here, with you both. But I was thinking of my father—of my mother—of my little sisters: and so I was weeping without knowing it, and it did me good.'

"I expected Bamboche would either rally or scold Basquine: he did neither; but said to her in a touching voice—

"'Weep, do: it is sometimes better than to laugh: and then—do you see——"

"Bamboche stopped short, without finishing his sentence: whether he was too deeply moved, or wanted to hide from us his feelings.

"For some time again we preserved the same unbroken silence.

"Bamboche was the first to interrupt it, saying—

"'Dear Basquine; if you are not still crying, *sing us a song*, since the bird sings no more.'

"'As you please,' said Basquine: 'but what shall it be?'

"'Whatever you like.'

"The poor child could only make a choice from among several smutty or obscene songs: she knew no other.

"So she began with her childish voice, and angelic purity—

> Bonjour, mon ami Vincent,
> Tu reviens de ton village,
> Veux tu me faire present,
> De——

"'No,—never mind the words,' cried Bamboche, interrupting her: 'the air, by itself. Any air you please—but not the words.'

"'I prefer it too,' said Basquine. 'I do n't know how it is, but I feel, to-night, that the words *do n't come as they used.*'

"In like manner as Bamboche, I had been, for the first time, painfully shocked on hearing that angel voice, whose soft and melancholy accent had never seemed more enchanting, utter that fragment of a licentious song. Basquine had experienced the same sentiment of disgust and shame, since she had said—poor creature—that *to-night the words do n't come as they used!*

"By what law of nature — by what unaccountable phenomenon was it that we all three of us felt that sudden reserve? Basquine, accustomed to sing audaciously the most filthy songs, and we to listen to them unmoved!

"Sire, believe my experience—the human heart is seldom utterly corrupted in those early years; and *all young criminals ought to have at least a chance of being reclaimed; for they are introduced to vice by others, and the sins they commit are not properly their own.* Nay, more, Sire: the State that sends a young offender to prison, where he is, of course, more deeply contaminated, *becomes an accessory with the old offender in the final ruin of the young delinquent, and is fairly responsible for all his future misdeeds!*

"I could not at that time understand this strange feeling; but now I can see in the manifestation of that reserve, and in the higher tone of our feelings, due, no doubt, to the salutary influence of solitude and pleasant occupation, a fresh proof that the most incarnate and the most premature corruption is never beyond the reach of reformation. No! no! In certain media, it yields to involuntary aspirings towards the good, the just, the proper, the sublime. Precious moments are they when the fallen soul tries to climb up again to the sphere from which it has descended! Precious moments;—but, alas! too transient and fugitive—when there still remains a possibility of reinstating the erring spirit of the degraded!

"Requested by Bamboche, Basquine sang, at first, the wordless tune of '*Mon Ami Vincent;*' but she sang it slowly and mournfully, and by that means extinguished the real character of that vulgar chant, and lent it an accent of singular melancholy.

"Then, like as a bird rising up towards the sky, after having skimmed the earth for some time with its feet, Basquine, warming by degrees, was able, thanks to the transitions of an art as full of instinct as of wonder, to pass from this theme into another that was extemporaneous, and charmingly soft and full of pensive gloom.

"It was something ingenuous, sad, tender, and ineffable; and soaring with unearthly wings, which a poet might perhaps have compared to a young seraph's song, imploring, with an infant voice, the pardon of a sinner.

"This comparison struck me the more, because the lovely child had began her tune whilst sitting down: but gradually, as she seemed lifted up by some mystic inspiration, with a move almost invisible, she got upon her knees, and continued to sing with connected hands, and her adorable face turned upwards towards the sky, all-resplendent and glittering with stars.

"Bamboche and I listened to the girl in a kind of still and quiet ecstasy: never had she sung in that way before. We had crept towards each other, and unwittingly had knelt down like her.

"Soon after, I felt Bamboche's forehead resting on my shoulder,—and his tears fell upon my hands.

"I had never before seen Bamboche weep; nor can I adequately express my emotion as I felt his tears fall upon my hand in the darkness. I threw both my arms about my comrade's neck. I was about to speak to him, when he said to me in a low broken voice—

"'Let her—let her sing: it does me so much good. *It seems to me as if she was asking pardon for me.* Poor little thing! she never thought of evil,—nor I neither formerly: I did not think of evil. *But they have ruined me, and I have ruined her!*

* * * * * *

"However extraordinary that tardy remorse of Bamboche might appear to me, I was not astonished at it; for the songs of Basquine had also elicited in me the most torturous feelings.

"Many years after that night, and when, with all the loftiness of her genius, Basquine surpassed the most celebrated performers, she has confessed to me that from the day when, with her heart swollen with infinite despair as she thought of her father, her mother, and her first early faith as a child; and finally of the dreary and dismal fate that must follow her premature and horrible pollution. She had, in some sort unknown to herself, conceived that sad and plaintive air in our solitary island from that day. *The art*, in its purest simplicity, its finest ideal, and yet in its deepest springs of the *social and humane*, had vaguely revealed itself to her juvenile understanding.

"'Words would have been powerless to express what I experienced on that night, at once so tender and so torturing,' said Basquine to me. 'I thought I heard some plaintive voice singing within me, and I repeated the air almost without perceiving it, and quite naturally, so faithfully did it portray my own feelings. That air I have always remembered with melting tenderness: and even now,' added she with a sorrowing smile, 'I cannot repeat it without bursting into tears.'

"A few minutes after, the vibrating voice of Basquine, whom we listened to in sedate silence, became covered,—sunk by degrees, and at length died on her lips, as a plaintive harmony dissolving in the distant space.

"After that the child drooped her head over her bosom, and continued silent awhile.

"But, not hearing us speak, she turned towards us soon after, and beheld Bamboche and I locked like two brothers in each other's arms.

"'What 's the matter with you?' she cried as she heard our sobs; for the contagious sorrow of Bamboche had affected me.

"'What 's the matter?' repeated Basquine, kneeling beside us, and taking our hands and pressing them: 'you are weeping.'

"'Yes; we weep as you wept just now,' answered Bamboche: 'and such tears relieve us and do us good.'

"Then, hugging us both to his large chest, he cried out in a tone that I never can forget—

"'And yet, we are not thoroughly bad, though!'

"No, no! I never shall forget his expression, as Bamboche uttered these words, which at once spoke his repentance for the evils he had committed, and seemed to upbraid the fatality of his course which had driven him to evil, and showed an earnest desire to return to the right way.

"We had made ourselves two little beds of heath and moss, one for me in the first room of the ruined house, the other for Basquine and Bamboche in the second chamber.

"But on that night, Bamboche lay down with me after kissing Basquine on her brow, and saying to her—

"'Good night, my sister!'

"Bamboche did not sleep much; he was agitated the whole night: several times I heard him heave a heavy sigh. As soon as it was light he woke me. His countenance was pensive, mild, and serious.

"We went into the inner chamber where Basquine was still sleeping; but her slumber was light as a bird's. On hearing our steps she opened her large eyes, and looked at us with a smile of surprise.

"We went out all three together.

"A few stars were still twinkling: the east was beginning to blush: the air was delightfully fresh: a thousand aromatic scents exhaled from the herbs moistened with dew. The morning already promised to be as fair as the preceding night.

"'Listen to me, Basquine and Martin!' said Bamboche to us, as we all sat down upon one of the clumps of rock which surrounded the lawn: 'we must now speak openly together: let us each say our mind without shame—we are only us three.'

"Basquine and I, astonished at his serious tone, looked at him without speaking. He continued—

"'To set you at your ease, I will begin first—you may laugh at me afterwards if you like; but I will be frank.

"'Laugh at you! and why, pray?' replied I.

"'Because I am chicken-hearted; because I renounce the Rump-in-the-Bowl; because I renounce myself:—but I do n't mind,—I will be frank.'

"Then, turning to me—

"'Brother, you remember how our friendship began: at first I pummelled you with blows; you returned them to me. I was treacherous and got you under me. You let me strike—I was touched—I spoke to you of my father.'

"'That 's true!'

"'Then I was softened: you crept into my affections; and since then we have been brothers.'

"'Yes,—and so we shall be.'

"'More than ever; for I feel better than I have been: and now, too, it is by remembering my poor father, that what happens—has happened to me.'

"'What has happened to you?' inquired Basquine.

"'As soon as I had resigned myself to our loss by the trick of the lead instead of the gold,' answered Bamboche, 'we began to roam the woods.'

"'And that reminded you of your father, and the time when you were quite a child, and helped him to do his work,' said I.

"'Just so; and since these two days that we have been here by ourselves, and undisturbed in this beautiful place digging the earth, picking up wood, gathering fruit, living like the country people, I do n't know myself again. Why am I altered? I can't tell, but so it is. I did not sleep last night—I have searched myself, questioned myself, and still the same answer comes back; since my poor father's death I have led a vagabond's life—this must not last—it must end for all of us; I have had enough of it:—I won't have any more.'

"Then as we stared at him with increasing surprise:

"'You are astonished at all this? so am I. I tell you I do n't understand it, but certain it is, that since I am no longer under La Levrasse, Mother, Bigbone, the clown, and all the cursed tribe, I can breathe at my ease, although my heart does still swell a little somewhere when I think.'

"Then, looking at Basquine with an expression which it is impossible to describe, he broke off.

"He stifled a sigh, and after a pause resumed:

"'But, except at those moments when my heart swells, as I said, it is full of gladness because I begin to suspect that the vile Rump-in-the-Bowl may have deceived me; for last night, I said to myself: 'Let me see, my poor father died whilst he was working: all his life long he was wretched, though honest and industrious.' That 's very true; but then all the good people would say to him with respect: '*Poor devil;*' such scoundrels as the Rump-in-the-Bowl might say: '*Bl—— fool!*' but nobody at all, whether good or bad, would ever say of my father; '*Lazy vagabond!*'

"'Oh no!' cried I and Basquine.

"'Well!' continued Bamboche boldly, 'I have thought a good deal about it, last night; perhaps people may say of me; '*Poor devil, Bl—— fool!*' but they never shall say *lazy vagabond.*'

"Again Basquine and I uttered a joyous exclamation.

"'When my father was dead,' resumed Bamboche, 'my first thought was, and it was the right one, to work for my bread; I began by asking for bread and work of a rich man. He answered me by setting his dog upon me, it 's true; but all mankind are not such rascals as that.'

"'Surely not!' cried I.'

"'Afterwards, unfortunately for me, I fell in with the beggar, and then with La Levrasse and his whole band, and that ruined me. But wait a bit; there is still something stirring here,'—and he struck his chest as he spoke; 'and I still return to the same point. Nobody shall ever say to me again: '*Lazy Vagabond.*' I have had enough of it; and so have we all.'

"Here too he looked again at Basquine with the deepest tenderness and pity, and then continued:

"'It is to her also that I owe a part of this sudden change. Last night, whilst she was singing to us, as if to ask pardon for me, my heart melted as I looked up to heaven, and said to myself: '*they speak of a good forgiving God.*' How good it would be to suffer us for some time to stay and live in this little piece of ground where we can do no harm to any body; leading such a life, alone, all three together, we should become quite good again; and when once we had forgotten the vile lessons of the Rump-in-the-Bowl, and had for ever resolved to flinch no more, then Martin, then Basquine, we would lead such a good life as——'

"An unfortunate incident at that moment interrupted Bamboche.

"Basquine and I were both so intent on what he was saying, that we did not hear the steps of a certain new comer, who after turning the corner of the house came up to us and in a formidable voice exclaimed:

"'In the name of the law, I arrest you: follow me before the magistrate.'

CHAPTER VII.

HOW WHEN LITTLE BAMBOCHE HAD SEEN HIS ERRORS, AND WANTED TO BE GOOD AND DO WHAT WAS RIGHT, THE LAWS OF HIS COUNTRY WOULD NOT LET HIM.

"At the awful sound of that threatening injunction: 'Follow me before the magistrate,' we stood rooted to the spot with terror and astonishment.

"The man who had excited our alarm was still young, tall of stature, tawny and freckled in the face, with a strong resolute mien; he wore over his blue smock-frock his belt of office as a forest keeper, and held in his hand, within its sheath, a large cavalry sword; a gigantic mastiff, raising, every now and then, his fiery-red eyes at his master, stuck close at his heels, and might have proved a strong auxiliary in case of need.

"The first thought which occurred to me was that we were taken up for burning La Levrasse's carriage; I cast a look of consternation at my two companions.

"'I arrest you, in the name of the law,' repeated the forest-keeper advancing towards us. 'Come, trudge along to the magistrate.'

"'Why do you want to arrest us, sir?' said Bamboche, the boldest of the three; 'we are doing no harm.'

"'You are *lazy vagabonds,*' replied the keeper in a loud, threatening tone: 'a cowherd told me that he had seen you enter the island, three days ago.'

"'True, sir, and since then we have never left it,' answered Bamboche.

"'And how then have you lived here?'

"'Why, on the fruit and vegetables we found, sir,' replied Bamboche.

"'Found?—how do you mean found?' cried the forest-keeper; 'it's nothing less than a theft, my little rogues. God help you! your case is a nice one—vagrants and thieves!'

"'Theft? to take what we required for food, do you call that a theft?' said I.

"'We did not think we were doing any harm to any body, my good sir,' added Basquine timidly.

"'Indeed little white-locks? you thought so, did you?' returned the keeper. 'We shall see whether your parents are of the same opinion, when they come to claim you; they will thrash you soundly, and serve you right too. What village do they live at?'

"'We have no parents, sir,' replied Bamboche, 'and we belong to no village.'

"'What, no parents!' cried the keeper, 'what, no village?'

"'No, sir, I have lost my father and mother; Martin, there, is a foundling; and as for Basquine——'

"'But where did you reside before you came here?' inquired the forest-keeper, with increasing suspicion.

"To this puzzling question Bamboche boldly replied:

"'We come from a great way off, sir, at least three hundred miles, and we have lived by begging on the road.'

"'Oh! oh!' cried the keeper, 'this is better and better: you are, it seems, a set of wandering beggars and little thieves; then, your case is really good, that 's all I can say.'

"'What will they do to us, my good sir?' said Bamboche with a look of simplicity, prudently receding a step or two at the same time.

"Then he whispered to me:

"'Go and fetch two good handfuls of cinder dust out of the hearth; come behind me and *be alert.*'

"After which he said to me aloud, no doubt to prevent the keeper from suspecting him—

"'Do n't we mean to tell this good gentleman every thing. Go and fetch our papers.'

"'I am going,' returned I, with a knowing look, turning my steps towards the house to obey Bamboche's orders.

"'Do people carry papers at your age?' said the keeper, shrugging his shoulders; 'the papers are of no use. I will hand you over to the *gendarmes*, who will take you to-night to prison as beggars; and from there you will be taken to a nice house of correction and kept in it till you are eighteen, my little rascals, ha! ha! You did not expect that, I say?'

"'In prison, till eighteen?' cried Bamboche, glancing with the corner of his eye to look for me.

"'In prison, because we are without father or mother,' said Basquine, clasping her hands;—'in prison, for eating a few potatoes which we picked up.'

"'Yes, in prison, that 's the rule,' said the forest-keeper; 'so to cut it short, follow me to the magistrate. Enough spoken, little whelps; come trudge along, or I will take two of you by the ears, and *Mouton* shall bring the other.'

"Suddenly Bamboche, who as he spoke had contrived in a manner to *turn* the forest-keeper, rushed upon him, seized him by the waist, and gave me the signal, when I threw the cinder-dust plump into his eyes.

"So dexterously had I obeyed the orders of Bamboche, that the keeper's head was buried in a thick cloud of dust.

"The miserable officer, completely blinded for the time, put his hands to his eyes, shivering with pain, loaded us with curses, and called out to his dog:

"'Bite, Mouton—seize them!'

'But Bamboche, after dropping the keeper's hands, had snatched up two handfuls of sand, and just as Mouton was springing at him with a loud bark, which threw open his enormous throat, he flung the sand so quickly into the gaping mouth that the poor dog, half-strangled, coughing, spitting, and kicking the earth, began to howl most piteously; whilst the keeper, on his side, kept rubbing his eyes, and uttering cries of agony and rage, stumbling at every step he took.

"Without losing a moment, we crossed the old house and ran along the path already known to us; we reached the banks of the river, forded it, bearing Basquine in our arms, then, stretching forward at a round pace, we plunged into one of the thickest parts of the wood.

"'What a wicked man he must have been to come and disturb us in the island,' said Basquine; when, having slackened our pace, we were able to converse on our late critical state.

"'It 's a sad thing,' answered Bamboche thought-

fully; 'the alarm will be given to follow us. If we are taken—there 's the prison.'

"'How can that be?' said I; 'because we are poor deserted children must we go to prison?'

"'Yes, the man spoke true; when I was arrested with the Rump-in-the-Rowl the *gendarmes* told me so. You have nobody to claim you. You have no home—to prison, you vagabond: and they took me there; but the Rump-in-the-Bowl and I were able to bilk them.'

"'My God! what are we to do?' said I to him.

"'Why, then, see you this: *to become good honest lads,*' returned Bamboche, scratching his head, '*it appears is not so easy a matter;* to wish it is not enough; in short we will do our best; but first of all let us leave this part of the country.'

"'Sooner or later,' said I, 'we should have been obliged to forsake our island. I know it 's so much good time taken from us; but still, we must one day have left the island, and then what should we have done?'

"My thought was to return home to Basquine's father.

"Here the little girl shuddered with fear.

"Bamboche continued:

"'Do n't be alarmed. I know what I should have to say to your father. He is a wheelwright: we will be his apprentices, Martin and I; we shall become good workmen. But what ails you, Basquine?' said Bamboche eagerly: 'you are crying.

"'My father may be dead,' said she, bursting into tears.

"Then she added in a heart-rending tone:

"'Ah! it is a year ago that we ought to have returned there: as you both used to promise me, to console me.'

"'Very true,' said Bamboche look down, 'we deceived you; but it 's too late to regret it now. Let us still go into your country.'

"'What, to see my mother again? I should not dare,' said the poor girl, shuddering with shame; 'oh! no, never—never.'

"'I understand you,' replied Bamboche: 'you are perhaps right. It 's my fault.'

"And he let his head drop with a dejected spirit.

"'It 's my fault.'

"'Listen to me,' cried I, struck with a sudden thought; 'Bamboche was saying this morning that, because one rich man had refused to assist him, or to give him employment, after his father's death, that was no reason why all mankind should be as bad. Well, let us go to some town: among a hundred people we shall at least find one that is compassionate; we will tell him all, and we shall be pitied.'

"'Martin is right, is he not, Bamboche?' said Basquine.

"'Yes, if they refuse us, we will knock at another door; we must at last meet with some kind heart.'

"'With our four louis-d'ors, we shall be able to live for several days,' resumed I, 'and——'

"'Thunder of heaven!' roared Bamboche, kicking and stamping with all the frenzy of despair.

"'What now?'

"'These louis-d'ors, for fear of losing them, I had put them underneath a stone in the old house, where they are still; so we have not a single penny.'

"'Silence,' said I, in a whisper. 'Listen!—I hear the sound of a carriage.'

"'Do n't let us stir till it has gone by,' said Bamboche.

"And then we stopped, and remained, silent and motionless, crouched in the midst of the close copse-wood, where we had halted to rest ourselves, after having wandered for several hours through the most impenetrable thickets, the brambles of which had nearly torn to ribands our already worn and tattered clothes.

"The noise I had noticed drew closer and closer, for we were then—without being aware of it—situated in one of the glades, or crossways of the forest.

"A hole through the foliage, already partly stripped in some places by the first cold of autumn, allowed us to perceive a carriage, which soon stopped near a sign-post,—a post the base of which was surrounded by a stone table.

"This equipage, the finest I had ever seen, was an open carriage drawn by four splendid horses, with two postillions in chesnut-coloured jackets and sky-blue collars; two footmen in gorgeous livery, of the same cloth, laced with silver, stood up behind.

"Three children, and a woman, who was still young, sat within the carriage, the lady sitting opposite to the children.

"When the horses stopped, one of the footmen got down from the back of the carriage, and holding his hat in his hand, went up to the door.

"Before he had time to speak, a little boy, five or six years old, with a lovely face, and long flaxen curly hair, cried out:

"'Let us get down here. *I will* get out here, I tell you.'

"'Mademoiselle,' said the footman, addressing the young woman who was the governess, as we soon discovered, '*Monsieur le Vicomte* wants to get down, must I go to open the door?'

"The governess was about to reply, when the child, stamping with passion, exclaimed:

"'Have not I told you that I want to get out here? open the door directly, I order you.'

"'Since Master Scipio will get out here, open the door,' said the governess in a stiff and formal tone.

"The footman let down the steps, and then held up his arms to lift the child out—Master Scipio, or *Monsieur le Vicomte*, as they called him. But the boy, raising a switch that he held in his hand, repulsed the servant with it, saying:

"'Do n't touch me. I can get down without you.'

"'Master Scipio wishes to get down himself,' said the governess, making a sign to the footman to retire. 'Let Master Scipio do as he likes.'

"Then Master Scipio got down as he could, but nimbly and quickly, the three steps; whilst the two lacqueys, both six feet high, and with powdered heads, stood uncovered on each side of the carriage-door.

"When he had alighted, Scipio, seeing the other lad preparing to get out, exclaimed:

"'No—not you, Robert. Stop inside; I want Regina to come out first. *The carriage belongs to me.*'

"Robert shrugged his shoulders and looked rather vexed; but, nevertheless, he obeyed.

"A charming little girl, rather taller than Basquine, stepped lightly out of the carriage, and was followed by Robert and the governess.

"The latter, addressing the Viscount, who was but six years old:

"'Scipio, will you take your lunch now, or by-and-by?'

"'We 'll take our lunch here, won't we, Regina?' said the child to the little girl.

"'Oh!' answered she good-humouredly, 'I say neither yes nor no. If I said yes, you are so contradictory, and so wilful, that you would be sure to say no.'

"'That 's quite true,' added Robert; 'Scipio is the smallest of us, and yet we must always do as he likes.'

"'Of course: since I have a carriage, and you have not,' answered the Viscount haughtily.

"'So has my father a carriage,' returned Robert, wounded in his self-conceit.

"'Yes, but he has only one, and he never lends it to you, whilst my father has five or six carriages;

and this one is all my own, to ride in whenever I choose.'

"'Me,' said Regina, gaily: 'I am far more to be pitied than Robert; papa has no carriage at all.'

"'And therefore do I allow you a seat in mine,' said the Viscount with an arrogant look.

"During this conversation, the servants having withdrawn several boxes from the carriage, (a canteen very choicely put together,) spread napkins on the stone table, and placed a dainty collation upon it. The plate and the cut glass sparkled with the rays of the sun, half obliterated by the large branches of oak which threw their umbrage over the cross-way.

"Bamboche, Basquine, and I, squatted in the thicket, and crowded together, neither daring to move nor to breathe, gazed upon this dazzling luxury, so new to us all, in silent stupefaction, from time to time digging our elbows most significantly into each other's sides, as the several dainties we saw in their silver dishes each drew our attention in turn: for since the day before we had been fasting; it might then be three or four o'clock. The sight of these inviting dishes sharpened our appetites still more; whilst, to our great surprise, those happy children hardly touched them with their lips.

"Behind the haughty little Viscount stood one of the footmen, who waited upon him with obsequious respect, and, like the governness, endeavoured to anticipate the most trivial desires of the child.

"The Viscount had just tasted only a slice of some delicious-looking pie, which was strongly working on my covetousness, when, taking up a glass full of wine and water, he poured its contents into the pie with a loud and merry laugh.

"'But, Scipio, why should you spoil the pie?' said the governess.

"'I have had enough of it,' said the Viscount.

"'But I meant to have taken some of it,' cried Robert.

"'Well,—you can eat something else; there's plenty to choose from. So much the worse—the pie was mine.'

"Bamboche trembled with a shock of stifled indignation; nor could he help muttering to himself—

"'Spiteful cub!'

"Basquine and I nudged our companion with our elbows. He restrained himself.

"But lo! Monsieur le Vicomte suddenly exclaims, with a look of surprise and anger—

"'What! there's no cream!'

"'Scipio,' said the governess, 'you know that cream does not agree with you, and that's why we did not bring any with us.'

"'I will have some cream, though—that I will.'

"'But listen——"

"'I tell you I will have some: let them fetch me some, directly.'

"And then, as the governess did not yield to him at once, there was seen, on the part of the little spoiled child, grown crimson with fury, one of those fits of passion peculiar to spoiled children, and this paroxysm soon became so alarming by its violence, that it was turning to convulsion.

"The governess, terrified at the sight, said to one of the servants—

"'This fit of passion may make Master Scipio ill: go directly: take the carriage with you; and look for some cream.'

"'Cream, indeed! you furious little brat!' muttered Bamboche, in spite of our warnings.

"'But where can we find cream in the midst of these woods?' inquired the lacquey, looking at the governess.

"'Go as far as Mortfontaine; you will probably find some there. You can go one way, James will go the other. Settle it between you; but try and bring some cream back with you: if not, Master Scipio may be taken with one of his dangerous fits.'

"The two footmen, accustomed, no doubt, to obey the childish whims of Master Scipio, got up behind the carriage, after bidding the postillions to drive off towards Mortfontaine.

"'I am sorry, Scipio, you have sent away the carriage,' said the governess, a few minutes after: 'the weather is cloudy—it might rain, and a storm might come on before your people return.'

"'What do I care for that? I will have some cream,' replied the obstinate boy; and, as a pastime, he began to fling sand, grass, and earth on the relics of the collation, which it is true Robert and Regina had ceased to partake of.

"The devouring attention excited in me by the display of that succulent repast, was soon succeeded by a feeling far less material: I could not keep my eyes off the lovely face of Regina.

"Until then, the prettiest face I had seen was Basquine's; but Regina presented so striking a contrast to our little companion, that the admiration felt for the one did not in the least interfere with that excited by the beauty of the other.

"Basquine was fair; but her complexion, formerly white and rosy, had since its exposure to the sun in our many wanderings, become embrowned like that of a brunette: Regina, on the contrary, had jet-black hair and a most dazzling skin. Three beauty spots, very apparent—a little too much so, perhaps,—one at the corner of the left eye, ascending towards the temple, the second a little above the upper lip, and the last lower down upon her chin, threw out more conspicuously the transparent beauty of her complexion and the purple of her lips.

"In spite of these small spots, so bewitching, Regina's countenance appeared to me rather serious for her age; her large black eyes were both pensive and piercing; whilst her small mouth, thin lips and chin slightly projecting, lent to her features a strong character of reflectiveness and resolution: her long dark hair, falling down in ringlets, floated over her shapely neck as flexible as a bird's. She wore a white muslin dress, a pair of trousers fringed with lace; her little feet were covered with fine socks and yellow skin buskins: a broad cherry-coloured riband was tied as a girdle round her waist, and the same coloured riband was fastened to her large round straw hat.

"I remember these particulars but too clearly. Alas! who would have told me that one day—— But no,—I must not anticipate.

"Regardless of hunger; forgetting Bamboche, Basquine, and all our present difficulties, I gazed upon Regina in rapture. Two or three times I felt my cheeks and forehead glow; and my heart beat and contracted most violently. Had it not been for the example and the influence of the premature amours of Bamboche, the rare beauty of the lovely child would doubtless have not excited so great an admiration, mixed with confusion,—an admiration which was soon increased by a deep sympathy; for Regina appeared to me as discreet and reserved as the Viscount was wilful and capricious: twice she even refused to give way to him with an air of youthful dignity and lively banter which absolutely charmed me.

"Robert, the other boy, about the size of Bamboche in height, but far more delicate, was very handsome: he assumed the *little man*, and held frequent low *asides* with Regina.

"In spite of myself, I was stung by this intimacy, no less than by the attentions which young Robert, with remarkable courtesy for his age, had lavished on Regina during the luncheon. He was dressed like Scipio, in a round jacket, light pantaloons, and turn-over collar, round which was tied a small satin handkerchief.

"I am dwelling on these particulars first, because they have been so deeply impressed upon my me-

mory that, many years after, I knew these personages again at first sight, though I had never met them since this event of my young boyish days; and then because the elegant mien and manner of these fortunate children was so strange a contrast with our rags, the brambles of the forest having fearfully tattered my smock-frock and Bamboche's, as well as the wretched dress of Basquine; for, when once we put off our radiant costumes of the gymnasia, we were generally most miserably clad.

"To return. We had been present, silent and hidden from the company in the glade, and had witnessed the sumptuous entertainment of the three children.

"Their carriage had been gone some time. Several claps of distant thunder, and violent gusts of wind, announced a coming storm.

"Suddenly, Bamboche, who had hitherto been pensive and thoughtful, rose suddenly up and said to us—

"'Follow me.'

"Then, pushing aside the branches which had concealed us till that moment, we appeared, all three, in the open glade, before the governess, Regina, Robert, and Viscount Scipio.

CHAPTER VIII.

BAMBOCHE AND MARTIN CAPTURE TWO LITTLE ARISTOCRATS AND CARRY THEM OFF.

"THE pale and hollow visage of Bamboche, surmounted with a shabby Greek cap, which hardly covered his long stiff black hair,—his tattered smock-frock—his robust and, considering his age, his tall stature, the fierce and wild aspect of his resolute countenance,—all tended to enhance the frightful effect of our apparition; for I was as wretchedly clad as my companion; and Basquine's attire was not less miserable than ours.

"On our appearance, Robert and Regina, as if by instinct, drew closer to the governess; whilst Scipio, the least alarmed of all, though the smallest, cried out—

"'I say,—look at the little beggars. What do they want here? How ugly and dirty they are!'

"Bamboche took off his cap, went up to the governess, and said to her in a mild tremulous voice, at variance with his strong energetic aspect—

"'My dear lady,—will you do a good deed which will make you prosper—as it will these little gentlemen—and this little lady, too?'

"'Why,' answered the governess, her astonishment increasing every moment; 'I cannot tell what you are going to request of me. Why are you hiding in these woods?'

"'Hear me, my dear lady,' replied Bamboche warmly: 'I will be frank with you. We are all three without parents—without resources: we have come a great way. We were lately engaged with a troop of tumblers: we perceived that such a life was unfit for us—that it would make us reckless and vicious,—so we ran away. You are rich;—afford us the means of being good: we only wish to work, and do what is right. We have been hitherto so very wretched, you see, that the smallest show of interest in our fate will be considered by us as real bounty. Come, my dear lady, a mere corner in your house will do, until you have been able to put us out as apprentices to—never mind what trades: all we desire is to learn a trade, and thereby earn our living. We are patient,—and have been so very miserable, that the rudest trade will not make us flinch. But, above all, we want to live with honest people. Indeed, it is time—it is more than time!'

"The governess was astounded—speechless.

"The children, looking at each other, did not seem to understand Bamboche's address; and yet he had expressed himself with a resolution so praiseworthy, and with so much true feeling, that twice had I caught a sight of tear-drops floating in his eyes.

"Desirous to support his appeal, I now took up the petition.

"Come, my good lady; let the parents of these children but consent, and that little gentleman (I pointed to Scipio) shall take charge of me; that other young gentleman shall take charge of my comrade; and that pretty young lady shall take charge of our little girl: you won't repent your goodness.'

"'No,—certainly not, Mademoiselle," said Basquine, seeking to fix, with her supplicating, the glance of Regina, whom I never once raised my eyes from; for, closer viewed, her beauty appeared to me still more dazzling, and I felt agitated to the bottom of my soul.

"'Come now,' replied the governess shrugging her shoulders and looking at us with haughty derision, 'there is no sense in what you request me to do; we do n't know you at all: we cannot tell who or what you may be. And yet you want these gentlemen and that young lady to beg their parents to take charge of you? now is such a thing possible?'

"'And yet we are three children in great distress,' said Bamboche, with a quivering voice, 'three children most wretched, and who really deserve your pity. Come, good lady, Martin has said it: let each of these children take charge of one of us; they are so rich—so happy! It will cost them nothing, and will make them prosper; for the day will come hereafter, when we shall be to them as friends, as brothers, and lay down our lives for their sake.'

"'Hear the little beggars,' said Scipio, smiling disdainfully, 'they want to be our friends, our brothers! Do you think I will keep company with beggars like them?'

"'My good little gentleman,' said Bamboche turning towards him with emotion, 'you have always been happy, have you not? You have never felt hunger or cold, or misery—you were never beaten. Well! put yourself in our place, we who have felt so much; and then you will feel for us.'

"'What a big fool he is!' cried Scipio; 'he asks me whether I have ever felt hunger or cold.'

"Hereupon I saw the angle in Bamboche's jaw start, as it used to do at all times when he had to constrain his violent temper, but he remained quiet.

"Regina alone seemed affected; twice her fair white face crimsoned, and she came nearer to Basquine with a mingled feeling of concern, reserve, and something akin to fear.

"Basquine, taking heart, advanced a step or two towards her, holding out both her hands; then, whether through fear or hesitation, Regina drew quickly back.

"A second time, she appeared to overcome her reluctance; but a severe look from the governess, added to the word: 'Regina!' paralysed the touching amenity of the child.

"The sky had still been growing darker.

"A few flashes of lightning had already glittered through the trees of the forest; the governess began to feel seriously anxious, for she could not help saying sharply to Scipio:

"'It was all the same one of your silly, childish whims which sent away the carriage, and here's the storm coming on.'

"'What do I care? I will have some cream, that I will,' said Scipio.

"The governess shrugged her shoulders, and then turning to Bamboche, who, with downcast eyes, and forehead bathed in sweat, was respectfully awaiting an answer to our appeal, she said to him:

"'I am the governess of Monsieur Scipio, the

Count Duriveau's son; M. Robert and Mademoiselle Regina, have been trusted to my care, and have come out to lunch with us; so I cannot undertake myself to take charge of you and your companions, for your request is a mad one—quite absurd. Indeed, if we were to take charge of all the beggars we meet——but it is really too ridiculous.'

"'My good lady,' resumed Bamboche in a supplicating voice, and making another and last effort to soften the woman, 'if you only knew our position—at any moment we may be taken up as vagabonds—thrown into prison—yes, into prison, until we are eighteen; and what for? Because we are alone—deserted—and yet what is it we ask for? a little help, and means to work; bread, water, straw and a good trade; that's all. Where is the rich man who cannot afford these alms to the poor, when it is asked for from the depths of his heart, and with tears in his eyes?'

"And truly, at that moment, two tears trickled down Bamboche's hollow cheeks.

"Regina was the first to perceive them, and, in a low tremulous voice, she said to the governess:

"'Look, Mademoiselle, he is weeping.'

"The governess herself seemed touched, and Robert, turning to her, repeated after Regina:

"'It's true, he is weeping.'

"'Yes,' rejoined Scipio tittering, 'some person whose name I cannot remember, says, that beggars always pretend to cry—to steal your money.'

"'How I detest that little rascal!' whispered Basquine to me. 'Bamboche will give it him directly—I 'm glad of it.'

"But Bamboche was too determined, too sincere and full of heart in urging his request, to attend to the little Viscount's impertinence; so, once more appealing to the governess, whose feelings had been roused:

"'Come, my good dear lady, give way to this good impulse, take pity on us—carry us to the Count you speak of; he won't be angry with you, I am sure; besides, you need not fear, we shall be able to persuade him,—only bring us to his presence—let us get up behind the carriage.'

"'Into *my* carriage—little beggars!' cried the Viscount, stupefied; 'well! upon my word!'

"'If you did but know Count Duriveau, my little friend,' answered the governess to Bamboche, with a sigh, 'you would feel that he would be less inclined than any body to yield to such a weakness. All I can do—is——'

"Then breaking off, the governess whose emotion was genuine, thought this a fit occasion to give her pupils a lesson of charity.

"She pulled out her purse, took from it three half-francs, and after giving one to each of the three rich children, she said to them feelingly:

"'Behold, my dear children, the difference there is between you and these poor little wretches; we must be kind and pity them: so give them each of you these half-franc pieces; and then they may gather up also the rest of our collation.'

"'But,' said Regina, timidly, 'Scipio has flung some sand and gravel.'

"'Do n't be uneasy, Regina,' returned the governess, 'they won't mind a little sand; they have never in their lives eaten such good cheer.'

"She next turned to us:

"'We are going to give you some money; and hold up your frocks to carry off the fragments of the lunch.'

"'Madam,' said Bamboche, sorrowfully, 'a few pence and the relics of this will not alter our position. This is not the charity we seek for,' added he, in an imploring voice, and clasping his hands: 'what we ask for is the means of labour—the means of relinquishing the life we are now leading; and it is not with the purse, but with the heart that such a charity is dealt.'

"According to her ideas, the governess could not help feeling that she had done all that was possible and reasonable; and therefore, feeling impatient at Bamboche's persistence, she replied rather sharply:

"'Since you are so nice, and difficult to please, go away and leave us to ourselves. We have given you all we were able—now get along: it begins to be too tedious.'

"'If *my* servants were here, they would drive you away with lusty kicks, too,' said Scipio, boldly.

"Very true; how troublesome they are, these little beggars,' added Robert, and throwing his half-franc at our feet he resumed: 'Be off, now.'

"Instead of throwing his piece at our feet, Scipio took aim at Bamboche, and instead of his face hit him in the breast.

"I saw that Regina was dying to put her offering in Basquine's hand, but her little heart failed her.

"'They won't go, then,' resumed the governess, impetuously; 'who could have imagined such obstinacy! Come—pick up your money, take or leave the fragments of the lunch, but away with you, or the first forest-keeper that comes by shall take you all up.'

"Just then a violent peal of thunder clashed above our heads.

"Almost at the same moment Bamboche, pale with fury, exclaimed as he strode towards the governess, with a fierce look:

"'So! that 's your meaning, is it? We won't take your alms—do you hear? We won't have your broken victuals, in which those saucy urchins have slabbered—do you hear?'

"Bamboche looked terrific; and I must confess that his indignation had laid hold of me: *so much contempt—so much harshness in giving alms revolted me as much as him;* besides, I must not conceal it, I began to feel indistinctly a jealous hatred towards Robert, who, at the first threatening word uttered by Bamboche, had drawn close to Regina to protect her.

"Basquine seemed to be painfully humiliated; she whispered to me in a tone of bitter hatred, and her eyes brimful of indignant tears:

"'Oh! these little rich ones!'

"The governess, terrified for a moment in that lonely solitude, had recovered herself gradually, reflecting that after all we were but children; she therefore continued with equal disdain and anger:

"'Did one ever see such bare-footed upstarts reject the alms we condescend to bestow upon them!'

"Bamboche, after the first explosion of his wrath, stood a moment silent, casting his gloomy looks around him, as if he was meditating some sinister design.

"Suddenly, as nimble as a wild cat, he rushed unexpectedly on the governess, seized her by the throat, and cried out to me:

"'Martin, lay hold of the two *gamins*—Basquine, take care of the girl.'

"Accordingly I rushed upon Robert, who boldly snatched up a decanter and threw it at my head; I eluded the blow, and seizing my adversary round the waist, nimble and strong as I had become, I threw him down easily, whilst Scipio, naturally brave, clung to my legs and strove to bite me; but having put my knee on Robert's chest, and one hand being enough to hold him down, I caught Scipio by his long hair with the other, and succeeded in keeping him quiet, whilst Basquine, obedient to Bamboche's command, sprang upon Regina, and held her arms tightly, saying to her:

"'Do n't stir—I won't hurt you at all.'

"All this had been effected in a twinkling.

"When we had in this manner mechanically obeyed our leader's injunctions, we looked to see how he was managing the governess.

"The poor woman, aghast and lividly white with dismay, was easily subdued by Bamboche, who was very tall and robust for his age; she allowed him

to bind her to a tree, with a long silk scarf which she wore.

"Then drawing from beneath his smock-frock his little pistols, the same which he had shown us when Lucifer dropped dead, Bamboche presented them at the governess, and said to her:

"'If you offer to cry out, I shall instantly blow out your brains.'

"The sight of these weapons completed the poor governess's affright; she shut her eyes, sunk down within herself like a dead weight, broken from time to time by a convulsive shudder.

"After this, Bamboche went up to the table, laid down his pistols there, took up a decanter containing Madeira, poured out three bumpers, and turning to me and Basquine:

"'Let them go—the little blackguards; they won't attempt to budge; and if they do——'

"And he showed them his two pistols.

"At that terrific threat, Robert and even the fiery little Scipio himself, stood fixed with dismay, whilst Regina, with the quick instinct of modesty and fearless pity, ran up to the governess, and strove to raise her spirits.

"Bamboche, directing us with his eyes to the glasses he had just filled, took up his own, lifted it and shouted with fierce excitement, which I shall never forget as long as I live:

"'Let us drink, '*Down with the rich!*' Let us ever remember that, in the deepest of our hearts, we wanted to be honest, and that we were threatened with imprisonment, and driven off with cruelty and bitter disdain. You see, after all, the Rump-in-the-Bowl was right. Down with the rich!'

"And he tossed of his glass at a single draft.

"'Down with the rich!' said Basquine, likewise emptying her glass.

"And then for the first time I perceived in her childish face an expression of sardonic spite, which struck me.

"'Down with the rich!' cried I in my turn, and drinking like my two companions.

"However puerile the scene may appear, it left behind it a gloomy recollection on my mind.

"The thunder continued to roar, the wind whistled, the rain fell in large drops, and the night had now almost set in beneath that roof of verdure, for the day was fast closing, and dark and heavy clouds obscured the sky.

"That glass of heady wine, drunk at once, and on an empty stomach—for we had fasted since the day before—did not intoxicate us, but produced a violent feverish excitement in all.

"'Now,' said Bamboche, turning round to Robert and Scipio, who, not daring to fly, had ensconced themselves under the stone table, and were crying bitterly, 'now, since the little aristocrats have laughed and made light of our poverty, we'll show them what poverty is.'

"Then stooping and taking hold of Robert by the collar of his jacket, he drew him out in spite of his resistance, and said to him:

"'Come, trudge along—you shall come and beg with us—and live as we do. Martin, take hold of *the Viscount*,' he added ironically.

But reflecting a moment, and suddenly letting Robert go, Bamboche pushed him aside, saying:

"'Psha! you may stay behind. You look more silly than cruel; but the Viscount Scipio, the true sprout of a cursed aristocrat, he shall come with us. Do you, Martin, lay hold of the girl. You have n't got a wife yet; she is pretty—I saw you squint at her—so I give her to you. Bring her along!'

"'Yes—that 's right,' cried Basquine, who, like us, was excited by the wine, and did not try to conceal a sort of savage joy.

"'Lay hold of the little rich girl, Martin! Was not I too dragged away from my father? So much the worse.'

"'Come—make haste!' cried Bamboche, taking his pistols in one hand, and dragging Scipio along, who struggled and shrieked with all his might.

"'Come, forward through the forest, the carriage may return. Martin, take hold of *your wife*, and let us cut. As for you, master Viscount, if you scream any more, or even stir, I will blow your brains out,' added he, clapping one of his pistols to Scipio's forehead.

"My head dizzy with the wine I had drunk, and my reason troubled and disturbed by Regina's beauty which had so greatly struck me, I ran to her, and though she clung to the governess's dress and cried out for help, I entwined her rudely in my arms: she was as light as a dove, and, in spite of her desperate resistance, I carried her off with ease.

"'Go before, Basquine,' said Bamboche, 'and open a way for us through the thicket. In less than ten minutes it will be quite dark, and they will have already lost the track of us.'

"The convulsive struggles of Regina were succeeded by a kind of lassitude and langour, as if the strength of the unhappy child had been spent; I felt her sink in my arms, whilst her head falling over my shoulder, her cold icy cheek lay against mine.

"By that time we had already advanced some distance through the thicket; I was alarmed, and could not help exclaiming:

"'Bamboche—the little girl is fainting.'

"'Nonsense,' said Bamboche with a rude laugh, and continuing to drag Scipio along with him; 'by and by *you shall revive her!*'

"The night was completely set in, and we plunged deeper and deeper into the forest.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW CLAUDE GERARD, THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER, WAS OPPRESSED IN HIS HARD VOCATION, AND BY WHAT STRANGE CONTRIVANCES HE MANAGED TO LIVE.

"CLAUDE GERARD! I cannot write the name without a deep feeling of admiration, tenderness, and unspeakable gratitude!

"I will presently relate how I became acquainted with Claude Gerard.

"Some time had elapsed since, in the forest of Chantilly, I had carried off Regina; and Bamboche had dragged Viscount Scipio at his heels. After wandering through the woods, chance threw us on the line of passage of a round of forest *gendarmes*. Scipio screamed for help—we were terror-stricken, and abandoning the two children we took to flight.

"The darkness of the night, the closeness of the copse wood, and our own fleetness, enabled us to escape from the *gendarmes*, who were heavily mounted; at day-break we had reached the outskirts of the forest, and pursued our way towards Louvres, turning our backs towards Paris.

"Deceived in our exertions to be upright and honest, all our bad passions had returned more bitter and more revengeful than heretofore, the rejections, the scorn we had met with, appeared to us to authorise and excuse our fatal resolution to do wrong.

"We were gay, jocose, and insolent; as we progressed, and went straight forward, only deviating in our course when we came to the large towns where the police is usually most vigilant, we used to beg in the villages, or sing in the taverns and wine-shops, stealing from time to time whatever we could lay our hands upon: sometimes the linen on the hedges where it was left to dry, and at other times kidnapping the stray fowls, &c., and selling for a few pence our petty thefts, as things we had found, and seldom without buyers on the highways; sleeping either in a barn or a stable, which was

opened to us through charity, and sometimes spending the night in the corn-mills, where we formed a shelter for ourselves, autumn having at length succeeded to winter.

"Never have I known the feelings of the gambler; but Bamboche, who subsequently was enabled to dispose—by means if not criminal, at least not very scrupulous—of considerable sums which he risked, alternately winning and losing, has told me, and I well understood him, that nothing more closely resembles the feelings of the gambler than the constant vicissitudes of hope and fear, joy and terror, plenty and want, which every day marked the character of our wanderings.

"Where shall we sleep to-night? will the alms be plentiful? the opportunities for a theft favourable? the receipts after Basquine's songs fruitful? And whether or not we should be taken, supposing the opportunity to steal did really come? Therefore, whilst we stole, what anxiety, what terror we felt! And when we had stolen with impunity, and sold the booty, what was our joy, our pride, and above all, our jokes, at the poor victim?

"We never passed a single day without experiencing those feverish emotions. *Chance*, and *the unexpected event:* our lives consisted in those two things. Now, I have since lived in very dissimilar situations, and I do n't remember to have lived, I do n't say more happily, but *more quickly*, than at that adventurous period in our career.

"If beyond the decrees of fate, which we obeyed, any thing could atone for the shame and disgrace of our conduct, at that time, it was that we acted according to a kind of childish frolic, and, to speak the language of that age, it was, perhaps, less acts of theft than *tricks*, of which we boasted; we cheated, and the *gendarmes* was in our eyes what the schoolmaster is to the rebellious scholar.

"We had come to a village of small extent, which we had descried from some distance, in the valley, from the top of a rising in the road, where stood a stone crucifix. The day was drawing to a close; we hoped to find in this place a couch for the night, for the cold was becoming intense; we were at the beginning of February.

"Passing through the fields, we soon reached the farthest houses of that village; one of them, standing by itself, a poor and wretched abode, had one of its windows open, which overlooked the path we were taking; on the opposite side of the path extended a thick and close heath.

"Bamboche went first, then Basquine and I. Suddenly Bamboche stopped, looked through the low window of the poor dwelling, started with surprise, and turning quickly towards us:

"'Money!' cried he in a whisper; 'upwards of a hundred francs, I believe.'

"And then, making a sign to us to be silent, he beckoned us to draw near.

"Then we saw through the window a kind of hut, separated from a stable by the hurdles of a sheep-fold, leaving a narrow passage between them. Bamboche pointed at a heap of five franc pieces which lay piled upon a truckle bed in a corner of the hut, and upon which a ray of the setting sun was shining.

"The house was involved in silence; and through the stable a door was seen wide open, which led into a yard filled with dung.

"After a moment's reflection, Bamboche said to us:

"'Basquine, go and watch in the path: Martin and I will enter the house through this window; Martin shall go and lock the stable-door inside, so as to prevent my being caught whilst I am picking up the silver—which will take some time.'

"'Agreed,' said I; 'pick up the silver, and I will shut the door.'

"'And, in case we are pursued,' rejoined Bamboche, 'let each of us cut away how he can; we will meet together again in about three or four hours at the rising in the high-road from whence we first saw the village: you know it—the place where there is a large stone cross?'

"'Yes,' said I, as well as Basquine, 'I know the place; I noticed the cross.'

"Bamboche, then making a sign to the girl to go and station herself at the bottom of the path and keep watch, leapt at a bound into the little hut through the open window.

"I followed him; and whilst he ran up to the bed to take the money, I flew off to the stable-door. I was going to pull the door towards me, when a man, who was coming from the yard, and whom I had not perceived, suddenly appeared before me, and, though rather startled, said to me gently:

"'What are you doing there, my boy?'

"Instead of replying, I cried out to give the alarm, as I had agreed to do with Bamboche, and sprang at the stranger's legs, seizing them so violently with my two arms that the unexpected attack made him lose his balance, and he fell; and for a second or two he attempted in vain to get up, so stoutly and fiercely did I cling to his legs.

"I could not long keep the advantage in so unequal a struggle; and truly, the man, seizing me soon after with a strong grasp, drew me out of the stable, and brought me into the yard, to examine me, I suppose, not then suspecting that he had been robbed, and that I was an accomplice of the thief's.

"I followed the man without offering the least resistance, and glad to think that Bamboche and Basquine had had time to fly.

"'What now?' said Claude Gerard to me. For he it was, and the tone in which he spoke testified far more astonishment than anger.

"'What do you want? Why did you fling yourself upon my legs?'

"Then, looking at me more attentively—

"'But you do n't belong to this village; do you?'

"I continued dumb.

"'Where do you come from? What place do you belong to?'

"I still continued silent; for the more I prolonged this examination the better I secured the flight and safety of my friends.

"'Come, my poor boy,' said Claude Gerard, with fatherly mildness; 'explain the case to me: this is not natural—you tremble—you seem to be excited; your face is pale: come, look at me.'

"For the first time, I raised my eyes to Claude Gerard.

"He was at that time the schoolmaster of that little community, and it is not too much to say that when he accepted the place and undertook its duties according to his way of considering them, it was equivalent to the sacerdotal office.

"I saw before me a man of some thirty years, of middle stature, robust appearance; but wretchedly attired in a blouse patched in several places. His naked feet were half buried within a pair of wooden shoes stuffed with straw. He wore an old grey felt hat, with a flat bottom and broad brims, like those usually worn by French carters. His strong expressive features were not regular; but they struck me by the look of melancholy softness and gravity which overspread them.

"'So you won't answer me, my boy?' continued Claude Gerard, with surprise, mingled with a slight uneasiness.

"'But now I remember,' he suddenly rejoined, 'I had been in the yard a quarter of an hour, and I never saw you come in! How did you get into the stable?'

"A sudden thought then occurring, I suppose, to his mind, he cried out—

"'The window in my room was open—the money!'

"Then, after reflection, he added—

"'No,—it's impossible—a mere child. And yet when he flung himself upon my legs he uttered a cry,—perhaps it was a signal.'

"Whilst thus arguing with himself, Claude Gerard had once more seized me by the arm: he drew me across the stable, hurried into what he called *his chamber*—glanced quickly at the pallet, and saw that the money was gone.

"Then, shaking me very strongly, he cried out—

"'Little rascal! I have been robbed, and you knew it.'

"I returned no answer.

"'Who has stolen the money? Will you answer me?' he exclaimed in a thundering voice.

"The same silence on my part.

"'Oh, my God!' said he, clapping both hands to his brow in despair. 'That deposit which was entrusted to me, stolen—stolen!'

"Availing myself of the despair and agitation of Claude Gerard, I ran off; but he overtook me as I was bestriding the window.

"'The thieves, whose accomplice this poor boy is, cannot be far from here,' cried he.

"Then, looking in my face with a mingled expression of anger, grief, and pity, he muttered—

"'So young!—my God!—already!'

"Then, without saying another word, he hurried me along; took me through the stable and the yard, and stopped at the entrance of a sort of lodge, somewhat larger than a dog-kennel; and, in spite of my desperate struggle, he locked me up in that hiding-place, securing the door outside by means of an iron bar driven through two rings.

"When I found myself a prisoner, I strove to escape; but the walls of the lodge were thick, and I had no tool about me fit to force an opening. The door was strong: there were a few holes bored through it; I put my face to them, but could not see or hear any thing.

"Seeing that it was impossible for me to get out, I became a prey to the most cruel anxiety. Heedless of the dangers which threatened me, I thought only of those which Bamboche might have to encounter; for if Claude Gerard were to give the alarm,—if the whole village were to begin beating the bush, the two thieves could not fail to be taken. That idea drove me to despair, yet not so much as the possibility of a separation.

"'At least, if we were sent to prison,' said I with all the selfishness of friendship, 'I should still be with Bamboche and Basquine.'

"'About an hour afterwards, I saw a dozen cows enter the yard, and make towards the stable, driven by a boy of my own age. Almost at the same moment a woman, dressed with a certain neatness, appeared in the yard, and in a shrill imperative voice, called out several times—

"'Claude Gerard!'

"On hearing the noise the little cow-boy came out of the stable, and said to the woman—

"'The schoolmaster is not within, Madame Honorine.'

"'What! not within?' replied she sharply: 'then where the devil is he?'

"'I don't know—not I. There's no one in his chamber, and the window is open.'

"'So I suppose I shall be obliged to wait for this *schoolmaster*,' said the dame, speaking to herself with inward vexation.

"Then the worthy dame began to walk up and down a few yards from my lodge, with still-increasing ill-humour.

"She was a woman of five-and-thirty, I should say; rather short and dumpy: her eye-brows were dark and thick,—her cheeks plump, hard, and ruddy,—a look frisky and proud withal. She had on a smart silk dress—a gold chain round her neck, and a cap with bow-knots of ribbon, which allowed her bands of black shiny hair to peep and display themselves.

"Dame Honorine was busy cursing between her teeth, when, after she had been waiting about ten minutes, I saw Claude Gerard return, with a pale disordered aspect.

"He was alone.

"My heart leapt with joy. Basquine and Bamboche were safe: he had not been able to overtake them.

"At the sight of Claude Gerard, the dumpy-dame, strutted forward eagerly to meet him, and, her cheeks flushed with passion, cried out fiercely:

"'Are you aware that I have been here these ten minutes, dancing attendance to wait for you? Where have you been? Will you answer me, I say? where have you been?'

"The schoolmaster appeared scarcely to hear the woman; he swept his hand over his dejected face, bathed with sweat, muttering in a low voice of woful despair:

"'There is no hope left! my God! The money is lost!'

"All my doubts were removed: Basquine and Bamboche had nothing more to fear. The sad dejection of Claude Gerard was a convincing proof of it.

"The dumpy-dame Honorine, no less stupefied than indignant at the schoolmaster's silence, screamed out:

"'Well! this is astonishing! I have spoken to Mr. Claude Gerard, and he has not answered me.

"'Excuse me, Madame Honorine—excuse me, said Claude Gerard in a broken voice; but recovering himself, 'I was going——'

"'What do I care where you were going? I have been waiting for you here this quarter of an hour.'

"To my great surprise the schoolmaster did not say a word of the theft he had just suffered. Overcoming his feelings, he answered the dumpy-dame with gentleness and even deference:

"'I am sorry to have kept you waiting, Madame Honorine. I did not know that you were coming. What can I do for you?'

"'First, I want to know why you have not swept out the vestry and put it to rights, as I ordered you this morning?'

"'I began to sweep it, Madame Honorine, but my school-time came on, and then——'

"'What's your school-time to me? the vestry must be attended to before your school. Are you not paid to keep it in order?'

"Very true, Madame Honorine.'

"Then, why are you so lazy? Then there's the pigeon-house. You have not set your foot there this week—it's quite filthy; the Curate went up into it just now, and it made him sick; he is quite incensed against you.'

"'Madam, allow me——'

"'You are not paid to clean the pigeon-house, I suppose you are going to say. It's quite pitiful! as if you could not do these little offices to serve the Curate.'

"'I do all I can for the Curate, as you know, Madame Honorine,' replied the schoolmaster with unaltered placidity and sweetness. 'The first moment I can spare, I will go and clean out the pigeon-house.'

"'You must make time to do it,' shrieked the dumpy-dame.

"'I will make it, Madame Honorine.'

"'Egad, I hope so. But, one thing more: there's a grave to be dug to-morrow morning; and that's why the Curate sent me here, to tell you of it. But the worshipful schoolmaster has been gadding about.'

"'A grave,' said Claude Gerard eagerly, 'for that young unhappy lady I suppose? So then it's all over.'

"'Yes, it is all over,' answered the dumpy-dame drily, 'the Curate gave her the sacrament just after dinner; a pretty treat it was too, after his coffee—poor man.'

"'Poor young woman,' said Claude Gerard in a tone of compassionate sorrow, 'to die so young, and so beautiful.'

"'I don't pity your beautiful women, who though they may be baronesses and great ladies, run away from their husbands with their lovers,' rejoined the dumpy-dame sharply.

"'That young lady, since the two years she had lived in this village, resided entirely alone with her servant; what then can be urged against her?' replied Claude Gerard in a grave voice.

"'Why, she lived there alone because before she came here, her lover had left her in the lurch to blossom again, and it served her justly right.'

"'What a frightful loss for the lady's poor little girl!' said Claude Gerard sorrowfully: 'she had only come here to close her mother's eyes.'

"'Her husband must have been a poor pitiful ninny to send her daughter to her.'

"'Ah! Madame, had she not been sufficiently punished by her separation from her child?'

"'Then why did she play her tricks?'

"'However guilty a woman may have been—is it possible to deny her the sight of her child—when, dying—she begs leave to embrace her for the last time.'

"'Yes, I would have refused her, I would.'

"'You are too severe, Madame Honorine, far too severe—you have a right to be so.'

"'Certainly, I have. But, you, there is a right which you must not take again,' rejoined the dumpy-dame, 'and that is, to keep me waiting as you did to-day. So then! let the vestry be swept out to-morrow—and the pigeon-house cleaned.'*

"'I will endeavour to do it, Madame Honorine.'

"'I *expect* you to do it,' said the short, dumpy woman, the Curate's housekeeper, as she strutted away with a majestic gait.

* This startling exposure of the low condition of the Country Schoolmaster in France is no exaggeration. The author quotes a long passage from an *official* publication, affording the fullest testimony that what he relates is true to the letter. The Village Schoolmaster in France is a common servant, set to do the very lowest drudgery of the *commune* he belongs to, and his life is one long struggle for the vilest food, lodging, and clothing. The official work from which he quotes is more instructive than all our quack books on Education put together, published this century, and is thus entitled:

"Tableau de l'Instruction primaire en France d'après des Documens authentiques, d'après les Rapports Adresses au Ministre de l'Instruction, publique par les 490 inspecteurs charges de visitor toutes les écoles de France, par M. Lorrain, Professeur de Rhétorique au College Louis le Grand. Paris, Hachette.

CHAPTER X.

HUMANE FORBEARANCE AND ADMIRABLE FORESIGHT OF THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER, WHO BEGINS TO UNDO THE EVIL DONE BY LITTLE BAMBOCHE TO LITTLE MARTIN.

"THE perfect gentleness, the calm and placid resignation of Claude Gerard, made a strange feeling come over me; I felt my heart melting, I had a kind of remorse that I had participated in a theft which appeared to cause that man so much affliction.

"It was almost dark when the dumpy dame withdrew.

"Claude Gerard walked to the stable; but, recollecting me, he turned abruptly back, came to my lodge, opened it and said to me:

"'Follow me.'

"Walking before the schoolmaster, I accompanied him into the place which he called *his chamber*.

"A pallisade of those hurdles which are used to fold sheep, divided the wretched little shed in which Claude Gerard lodged from the stable. By the light of a candle which was burning, I saw above the schoolmaster's pallet a few shelves covered with books; in a corner, leaning against the wall, was a black board, with some figures on it, drawn in chalk which had not yet been rubbed off, and on a ricketty table lay a tolerably large number of copy-books.

"I looked at Claude Gerard with anxiety, not knowing what he was going to do with me.

"No doubt, thought I, he will want to compel me to name my pals, and then hand me over to the *gendarmes*, to take me to prison, where I must stay till I am eighteen: but I will die sooner than peach upon Basquine and Bamboche, said I heroically to myself, thinking with acute anguish of our separation, which was likely to be long, and might be eternal. How should I find them again? How could I escape to go and join them at the rendezvous we had appointed to meet at in case of pursuit? Should I not be too late?

"Claude Gerard, without speaking to me, took off a shelf a piece of bread almost black, and a bag of walnuts which he laid down on the middle of the small table, together with a stone pitcher of water, then cutting me a slice of bread and adding a few walnuts to it, he said to me gently:

"'Eat if you are hungry.'

"In spite of my uneasiness and trouble, I felt a devouring appetite; since the morning we had not once broken our fast; I was therefore doubly sensible of the hospitality of that man who had so much reason to complain of me.

"Whilst I was chewing a hard piece of bread and breaking the walnuts with the knife left upon the table, Claude Gerard sat upon his bed, and seemed to observe me attentively; shortly after, he said in a low voice, as if speaking to himself:

"'And yet there is both gentleness and reflection in that countenance.'

"Suddenly the door of the cow-house, which was only fastened by the latch, was pushed open, and a coarse voice called out:

"'Ho there! Claude Gerard!'

"'What now?' inquired the schoolmaster, 'who is there?'

"'It is I, Bijou, the swineherd of his worship, the mayor, who has sent me to you in haste.'

"'What 's your business?' said Claude Gerard; 'come in.'

"'Thank you,' said Bijon, 'I might be kicked by the cow. I can speak to you where I am: I'm in a hurry.'

"'Well, speak.'

"'His worship desires you to come to-morrow morning, at day-break, with your big bell, to cry something which he will tell you of—so that you may ring the bell and have done before the people go to the fields—that 's the matter.'

"'My lad, you will tell the mayor that it cannot be done, for the curate has ordered me to dig a grave to-morrow at day-break, for the burial of a young lady. That cannot be put off.'

"'Oh! I don't know that. His worship told me you must come. And then there 's the wash-woman come to complain, this evening, that the wash-water must be cleaned out, for their linen becomes quite black and stinks dreadfully, so foul is it: his worship says you are to clear away the dirt to-morrow after you have done ringing the bell.'

"'My lad,' resumed Claude Gerard composedly, and yet with a degree of ironical reproof, 'you will tell the mayor that the curate on his side having ordered me to clean out his pigeon-house without delay, I feel quite puzzled between the wash-water and the pigeon-house; yet, as the wash-water is of greater consequence to the parish, I will attend to that as soon as I have dug out the grave, and will ring the bell after the people have returned from the fields.'

"'I will tell him so, but he will exclaim against you, for he is the greatest fury of all the furies.'

"'Good night, my lad,' said the schoolmaster, wishing no doubt to put an end to the conversation at this point.

"'Good night, Claude Gerard,' returned the swineherd, 'I'll go and tell the mayor that you won't ring the big bell to-morrow morning.'

"And the mayor's envoy then left the place.

"I could not conceive at that time the extent and variety of a schoolmaster's functions, and yet I had just heard with astonishment the dumpy dame command Claude Gerard, on the part of the curate, to dig a grave, to sweep the vestry, and to clean out the pigeon-house of his reverence. But my surprise was greatly increased when Bijou, the mayor's swineherd came, on the part of the mayor, to order Claude Gerard to play the public crier and rake out a wash-pond.

"What struck me very much too, was the mild and passive resignation with which Claude Gerard seemed to sustain this multiplicity of duties, and promised to obey so many different orders.

"When the swineherd was gone, Claude Gerard was silent for a minute, then looking attentively at me, he said:

"'Listen to me—the money stolen from me, does not belong to me; it had been trusted to my care, your accomplices have escaped, the money is lost to me. When the owner applies for it, how shall I return it? There was a hundred and twenty francs in all. I am too poor and my gains are too small, ever to be able to save such a sum; I should have but one way of proving that I have been robbed; and that would be to give you into custody, as the accomplice of the thief.'

"Here Claude Gerard broke off for a few seconds, without taking his eyes off me; his threat, which was merely meant to try me, made me shudder.

"'You are afraid of being arrested?' said he to me.

"'Of being arrested alone, yes; because in prison I shall for ever be separated from my comrades, and I had rather be shot than give up all hopes of seeing them again.'

"'Your comrades are those who have robbed me? so you dearly love them, do you?'

"'Yes—oh! yes, I love them dearly,' answered I with tears in my eyes.

"'I think you tell the truth, and that bespeaks a good heart. But how can you love thieves, and wretches who, no doubt, have ensnared so young a child to make a tool of you?'

"I did not answer this time; I thought it prudent and cunning to conceal from him that my accomplices were as young as myself, and not to give

any particulars respecting Bamboche or Basquine but to let Claude Gerard continue in his error.

"My silence having lasted some time, the schoolmaster resumed—

"'Who are your parents? How came they to leave you at your age to act without a guide?'

"'I have no parents.'

"'You have no parents?'

"'No—I am a foundling!'

"'Oh! I understand,' exclaimed Claude Gerard, with a sigh of sympathy: 'that 's it;—first desertion—then the influence of vicious examples—then vice. Poor, unhappy boy! I can no longer find heart to accuse you.'

"The schoolmaster's melancholy countenance expressed so tender a compassion, that I felt touched. Claude Gerard paused awhile to reflect, and then added—

"'At your age, to return to the right path is almost always possible. Come—be frank,—tell me all; and then, perhaps——"

"'I have nothing to confess,' replied I rudely. 'I won't peach upon any one: send me to prison, if you like.'

"Instead of being angered by my answer, Claude Gerard resumed kindly, at the same time shrugging his shoulders—

"'In prison! When I first surprised you—when I found that I had been robbed—should I not have had you arrested?—should I not have denounced the theft, had I not trembled at the bare idea to send you to prison? Were you a man, I should not hesitate:—thieving is an infamous crime, and justice must be done. *But at your age*—unhappy child—*all is not yet hopeless; and all hope would be for ever lost, if you were sent to prison.* You would stay there till you were eighteen, and come out of it a hardened—an irreclaimable criminal!'

"'Then, sir,—my good sir,—let me go away!' cried I, clasping my hands as I saw a ray of hope beaming forth. 'Oh! I implore you, let me go—to-night.'

"'And where would you go to?'

"'I would endeavour to rejoin my comrades.'

"'And if you succeeded to rejoin them, what would you do?'

"'I would stay with them.'

"'To steal again?'

"'Oh! no,—not always.'

"'How so—not always?'

"'We only thieved when we could not do otherwise.'

"'So you confess, therefore, it would have been better not to steal?'

"'Why! then one does n't run the risk of being taken up; and, besides——'

"'Besides what?'

"'They say it is not proper to steal; but when one is hungry, one must eat.'

"'Since you did not always steal, how did you manage to live the rest of the time?'

"'We begged alms; and at other times, *Basquine* used to sing at the taverns,' answered I heedlessly.

"'Basquine!' replied Claude Gerard, looking at me with surprise.

"I was once again silent, and regretted to have let this much escape me. For several moments the schoolmaster held his tongue. At length he added, without appearing to notice my sudden reticence.

"'Why are you so desirous to join your companions?'

"'Because we swore never to part!' cried I.

"'In general, a boy so young as you are, seldom engages himself by such an oath with grown-up people,' said Claude Gerard to me.

"'My companions are not grown-up people,' said I.

"Then, seeing that I regretted this second involuntary avowal, he added—

"'Come, do n't be sorry for having told the truth; it may be the better for you, and for your companions, too,—yes, for your companions.'

"I looked at the schoolmaster with equal astonishment and distrust. He guessed my thoughts, for he went on with an accent replete with goodness—

"'You seem to distrust me: have I the look of a hard-hearted man? Did I ill-treat you when I first discovered the robbery? Am I now speaking to you harshly? Do n't I show you more pity than anger, in spite of your misdeed? And do you know why, my poor child? Because I think there is some good in you,—because I feel sure you have been only led astray, like your own companions, probably. Come, tell me how old they are.'

"'Basquine is two years younger than I am, and Bamboche two years older,' answered I, unable to resist the penetrating influence of Claude Gerard.

"'A little girl!—and of such tender years,—already taught to steal, and the theft committed by another child. Oh! but this is horrible!' cried the schoolmaster. 'Unhappy creatures! By what strange accident were you all three brought together? Are your companions likewise without father or Mother?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'And have you been long used to this vagrant life, and to beg upon the high road?'

"'Yes, sir,—these many months.'

"'Just now, you appeared to me to hope to overtake your two friends, if I would suffer you to go. I suppose you have, therefore, an appointed meeting?'

"'I did not say so.'

"'No; but it is next to certain. Your companions, whom I could not contrive to catch, are no doubt waiting for you somewhere about the village.'

"'I swear to you, sir, they are not,' cried I in alarm at Claude Gerard's penetration: 'and, moreover, if I did know where to find them, you should kill me before I would betray them.'

"Then I added stealthily, and glad to show my own keenness of perception—

"'You are only pumping me, that you may pounce upon my comrades and get your money back. You want to *do* me.'

"Claude Gerard looked at me with a smile of sorrow.

"'Can you have such after thoughts when I am acting so indulgently towards you? 'T is not right. But, after all, how could it be otherwise, after the life you have led? I pity you—indeed I do, my poor child—far more than I blame you.'

"'If I have led such a life, it is not my fault,' said I, affected by his piercing gentleness of manner. 'Twice we wanted to turn from evil and be honest,—they treated us like dogs. So, then, we can't help it: we will continue as we are.'

"'So you and your companions have often a sense of your errors, and regretted the life you were leading?'

"'Oh! yes!—more than once: and, as Bamboche said one day with tears, '*We were not naturally vicious.*'

"These last words evidently struck the noble fellow. He paced his chamber for a few minutes without speaking; then, returning towards me—

"'Listen to me! I believe you are still capable of returning to the right path, if an honest man would take upon himself to direct you. If you like it, you shall stay here; but I must tell you candidly, your lot will be a poor and trying one. The black broad you have eaten to-night is my daily food. Like me, you will have to sleep in this stable: you will share in my painful toil. But I will snatch you from a course of life which is leading you to crime. I will unfold the good principles that are in you:—I will instruct you;—I will put

you in the way of earning hereafter an honest livelihood, and of continuing through life an upright man. I feel for you a degree of interest which I cannot account for; and it would astonish me did I not reflect on the occasion that produced it, my poor child; for this is the moment which must decide your fate for ever; for now the moment is come for you to choose between good and evil!'

"'Sir!'

"'Listen further: I wish to keep you along with me—but I cannot force your inclination. If you accept my offer, it must be done freely—willingly; for at any hour in the day you will be at liberty to leave me. So—reflect, and then take your resolution.'

"That dismal laborious life appalled me. I did not reply: and nevertheless I felt myself deeply affected by so much solicitous kindness. Claude Gerard continued—

"'Now, this is what I propose to you in respect to your comrade and the poor little girl along with him.'

"I looked up at the schoolmaster in amazement.

"'It is still early,—the night is a fine one—this window is a low one:—if you know where to discover your companions, go to them.'

"And, hereupon, the schoolmaster opened the window.

"The moon was shining. I saw the distant country; and at the extreme end of the horizon, the rising hill which divided the high road where Basquine, Bamboche, and I, had fixed our appointment near the stone cross.

"Not rightly understanding Claude Gerard's intentions, I stood lost in astonishment.

"He proceeded—

"'If your companions still nurture the desire of returning to a better life, tell them I will find out two persons who shall do for them what I offer to do for you; but that, as in your case, the condition that awaits them is trying and poor. Tell them, also, that the money they have taken from me is not mine—that the theft may distress me most cruelly. If your companions have still any thing good in their hearts, they will return here with you,—they will restore me that money which they would soon have expended in vanity and frivolity: and here they will find an asylum, bread, and good counsels; nor shall you be separated.'

"'We shall not be separated?' cried I.

"'No; your comrades, I hope, will reside in this village: in this school you will spend your days together. On the other hand, if your companions persist in their evil course, leave them. If you are yourself unaffected by my offer, stay with them—return no more. But the day will come, my poor child, when you will bitterly regret it.'

"I continued motionless, looking up in his face, hesitating between the feelings excited by his language, and the fear of falling into a snare.

"Astonished at my vacant looks, Claude Gerard resumed—

"'Go, then:—what keeps you?'

"'I dare not; you mean to deceive me.'

"The magnanimous man shrugged his shoulders, and replied with an angel's goodness:

"'Deceive you? how could I? I believe you determined enough to withstand my threats if I wanted to compel you to inform me of the place of rendezvous where your companions are waiting for you.'

"'Oh! as to that, yes; you should kill me first!'

"Well! I let you go alone.'

"'And if you should follow me at a distance?'

"'It is a clear moonlight; the country is an open one: if I follow you, you will see me; and then you can stop.'

"My obstinate distrust finding nothing to reply to these objections, I continued mute.

"'Come,' said Claude Gerard to me; 'make haste: it is between three and four hours since the theft was committed; your companions, not seeing you return, may be tired of waiting for you,—so make haste and begone.'

"I confess it, although touched with the proofs of compassion and interest which Claude Gerard had testified to me, I thought of nothing but the hope of returning to Basquine and Bamboche, and leading with them the same wandering life as before, should they reject the offer I was to bring them.

"I ran to the window.

"Just as I was about to climb through, Claude Gerard stopped me, and said to me in a tremulous voice, as he opened his arms to me—

"'Embrace me, my poor child; and may God direct you and bring you back; whether alone, or with your companions.'

"I threw myself into his arms without being able to restrain my tears; for several times, during this interview, I had felt my eyes moisten as he spoke. Could I help being moved by the ineffable indulgence—the fatherly kindness—with which the generous man treated me,—I, an accomplice in a misdeed which might be fatal to him? Besides, as he spoke, he revived in me those salutary feelings of remorse by which my companions and I had already several times been visited. And, therefore, it is probable that had it not been for my affection for Basquine and Bamboche, I should have accepted his generous offer: but tearing myself away from him, I now rushed to the window.

"And yet just as I was getting out, I hesitated for a moment to leave the tutelary refuge that was offered to me.

"My heart was dreadfully oppressed; I felt that I was for ever renouncing the right way; but the recollection of my young friends prevailed, and out I sprang into the road.

"At first I ran on for several steps; then, thinking how ungrateful it would be to leave the place without saying a word of acknowledgment to Claude Gerard, I stopped and turned about.

"By the light of the moon, I saw the schoolmaster seated on the ledge of the window: he was looking after me with an air of sadness.

"'Adieu, sir,' said I to him, with a heavy heart; 'I thank you for having been so kind to me, and for not having me taken up.'

"'I cannot bear to bid you farewell, my poor child,' answered he; 'let me still hope you may return. It is impossible you can be insensible to what I have said to you and offered you; or else,' added he, with heart-rending sadness, 'there must be no hope left of your reformation. Go, and let your fate be fulfilled.'

"'I think I shall not return, sir,' said I, shaking my head: 'it is an adieu—an eternal adieu, believe me.'

"And, thereupon, I hurried rapidly away towards the high road, where our meeting had been appointed to take place in case of pursuit.

"The long use and habit of a wandering life had imparted to me a strong local memory; and, consequently, I retraced my steps readily enough through a labyrinth of pathways which intersected the fields.

"After a quarter of an hour's walking, I stopped upon a rising ground from which I was enabled to see the schoolmaster's little window: it shone from afar with a feeble light; and within the reflection of that pale light I could distinguish the dark outline of Claude Gerard, still seated on the ledge of the window-frame, and probably still looking after my steps.

"I began to descend the shelve of the hill on which I had stopped; the house was no longer visible, and I continued my course with greater speed.

"The more I wandered on from that light-house of safety, the more my good resolves appeared to grow faint.

"I reflected on the hard and helpless condition to which I should have for ever bound myself if I had accepted Claude Gerard's offers; and soon, when I compared the life he tendered me with the idle, joyous, roaming life, full of chances and incidents, whose exciting charms I had already tasted, a life, too, shared with the two friends of my childhood, I wondered at my recent indecision, and railed at my own weakness.

"At length, after an hour's progress, I reached the high-road; I saw at some distance before me, on the top of the rising, the stone cross, which was the spot appointed for our meeting in case of a pursuit.

"The silent and deserted road was illumined by the moonlight.

"I felt assured that I should meet with my companions. They had been able to escape without peril, but they must have experienced the acutest alarm on my account; I thought them incapable of forsaking the country, without at least making an effort to discover me. Desirous therefore of giving them the earliest warning of my return, and though I was still rather distant from the spot, I stood still and uttered a shout well-known to both my companions.

"I cannot tell the anguish, nor the throbbings of my heart with which I awaited for their answer to my signal.

"My expectation was deceived.

"There was no answer.

"'They are too far off—they cannot hear me,' said I to myself, running towards the stone cross, the arms of which glittered in the light, whilst the cumbrous pedestal was buried within a gloomy umbrage.

"Thanks to the rapidity of my speed, and in spite of the steepness of the rising, I reached the basement of the cross.

"My companions were not there.

"It was in vain I looked about me, far and near, for the culminating point where I stood overlooked the two opposite risings of the road; I could see nothing: with a bursting heart, I called—I shouted.

"No voice answered to my calls—to my shouts.

"Then, exhausted with fatigue, panting, in despair, I flung myself down at the foot of the cross and burst into tears, suffering a thousand deaths at the detestable desertion of my comrades. Suddenly I felt my hands, which touched the earth, become quite wet: I looked about me and saw a something like a blackish pool, and in the midst of it a large piece of white stuff; I picked it up, and three five franc pieces which lay beneath shone in the moonlight.

"But judge of my consternation, when, on examining the piece of stuff, I knew it to be the miserable shawl which Basquine had worn that very morning! That little shawl was bloody, for the blackish moisture in which I had wetted my hands was a pool of blood.

"The shawl, and the three pieces of silver, fallen by chance, or forgotten there, proved to me that Basquine and Bamboche, faithful to their appointment, had come there after the robbery to wait for me; but what had become of them since? Was it the blood of Basquine? or was it Bamboche's that stained the earth? And by what strange and mysterious event was it that the blood which alarmed me had been shed?

"All these terrifying thoughts rushed at once and confusedly into my mind. I felt my thoughts bewildered; a kind of vertigo seized upon me, and I fell back senseless at the foot of the cross, holding in my hands the little blood-stained shawl of poor Basquine.*

* Amongst the many new and terrible opinions of the author, diametrically opposed to current ideas, there is one which the reader will often detect within the folds of his argument: and that is, *that in the present system of actual life the blanks are for the virtuous, and the prizes for the wicked.* Eugene Sue of course does not say or insinuate that such a perverse distribution of things is right: he only says that such is the case. And so it is. For within the last four years three of our ablest and best fellow citizens have been suffered by the whole country to die almost in want; whilst two notorious quacks, who commit murder weekly with their ointment and pills,—the one having been a common soldier, the other an errand boy—are enabled to mingle in the cavalcade at Hyde Park, thanks to the princely liberality of their over-credulous victims.—*Translator's note.*

CHAPTER XI.

LITTLE MARTIN, LIKE MANY A WISER MAN, MAKES A VIRTUE OF NECESSITY.

"I DON'T know how long I continued insensible, without seeing or thinking; but, when I recovered, the night was utterly dark, the moon having disappeared. I collected my thoughts. The three pieces of money and the little bloody shawl which still lay beside me, recalled me to actual occurrences.

"What was I to do—what to resolve upon? Wait till day and begin my search after Basquine and Bamboche? How could I hope to overtake them? Which way ought I to take to begin the search? What blood was it that had been shed? was it hers—was it his? If one of them had been badly wounded, even killed, where had the other fled to? To what hospital had the wounded party been transferred—or where had they concealed the body?

"My mind was distracted by so many poignant and perplexing doubts, that I saw no possible and practicable opinion to adhere to.

"Tired of pursuing these reflections, I remembered Claude Gerard and his liberal offers.

"True I was not greatly captivated by the thought of continuing by myself that wandering and venturesome life, which had lost its chief attractions now that Basquine and Bamboche were no longer to share it with me.

"On the other hand, Claude Gerard had frankly told me, that by accepting his offer, I should have to put up with a life of privation and labour; now the habit of idleness and independence was already so strongly rooted in me, that I could not contemplate without fear, that long series of joyless days devoted to labour and drudgery at the schoolmaster's. Still, I should at least enjoy in his abode a life which, however poor or arduous, would be secure; moreover, though there was between him and me a great disproportion of ages, his affection might help me to endure the loss or the absence of my two early friends.

"That want of affection—of mutual trust, so natural—so lively to me, far from diminishing, had extended still more by the practice of every act of devotedness with which my tender attachment to my companions had inspired me; and therefore to live alone for the future would be too cruel an alternative—I who knew by experience the great difficulty of finding a friend.

"These reflections made the scale incline to the side of Claude Gerard; although I was conscious there could never be between us either intimacy, mutual confidence, or companionship. I was awed by him; and I already knew enough of my own heart to foresee that this impression of gratitude mixed with respect, could never resolve itself into familiarity and tenderness.

"I know not how long might have lasted this dishonourable hesitation on my part, but for a strange idea which I suddenly conceived.

"I had never forgotten my meeting with that beautiful little girl named Regina, whom I had eloped with in the forest of Chantilly, an elope-

ment, however, which, in spite of the bad counsels of Bamboche, had been perfectly innocent; for all my temerity did not extend beyond a single kiss printed on the pale and icy brow of that hapless child as she lay fainting in my arms, till, terrified by the approach of the forest *gendarmes*, Bamboche and I had abandoned our two captives and taken to our heels.

"Hurried away by the example of Bamboche's premature loves, which had probably incited in me a quick and early sensibility, I had suddenly become, and had since remained passionately fond of Regina, whose recollection was at all times present to my mind.

"My friends had began by making game of me, and had ended by considering my love as an earnest one. Often in the midst of our perilous expeditions, Regina was the constant theme of our talk. As for the means of seeing Regina again, and teaching her to love me when *I should be grown bigger*, means frequently broached and canvassed amongst us, I am ashamed to acknowledge their extravagances, or their audacity; one alone was rather less gross, and less unfounded than the rest: Bamboche and I, when we grew older, were to enlist as two soldiers, and Basquine to follow as a sutler-woman. By my courage and conduct I was to become either a captain or a general, and marry or carry off Regina *in carnest*, this time.

"Absurd as such a childish romance may seem, I had gradually caressed it as with a vague, indefinite hope; and, strange to say, though I took care not to confess it to my companions, often when thinking of Regina, I felt a secret regret for the evil course I was running, and in spite of Bamboche's pernicious example, a mysterious instinct revealed to me that there was a something of the honest, the lofty, and the pure in real love.

"At first, amidst the grief and embarrassment in which the disappearance of my friends had plunged me, Regina's image had not presented itself to me; but in the midst of my perplexity as to Claude Gerard's offers, I thought of Regina, and said to myself:

"'Nothing in the world could have induced me to separate from my friends; but, since that misfortune has happened to me, I think that by following the counsels of this good man, *I shall be moving towards Regina;* and that the mere reflection of doing so, will make my condition less arduous and painful to bear.

"At present when, for so many reasons, alas! I scrutinise my most trivial recollections on the subject of Regina, I perfectly remember that, however extraordinary it may appear to me now, such was the principal reason that determined me to return to the schoolmaster.

"The thought of drawing nearer to Regina by becoming better.

"Picking up the bloody shawl and the three pieces of silver, I returned therefore to the village.

"When I reached the small rising whence the schoolmaster's dwelling became visible, I perceived there was still a light in the window.

"'He expected me,' said I to myself.

"I cannot tell the reason, but I felt a sort of resentment towards the schoolmaster. The unerring foresight which I attributed to him was a deep source of humiliation to me; and therefore in spite of my good resolutions, I had a mind to go back. I possessed fifteen francs, the rest of the robbery: it would last me for several days; but when I reflected that the money was stained with the blood either of Basquine or Bamboche, I looked with horror on that resource, a whimsical scruple which the idea of appropriating my share of the booty had not suggested. So I went forward.

"On arriving within a short distance of the schoolmaster's, I stood still, and through the open window, set myself attentively to observe Claude Gerard.

"In this study of myself which I am now fulfilling, and face to face with my own conscience, I am resolved to say all, especially when it relates to those evil sentiments which, since then, I have either eradicated or at least striven hard to resist.

"I did not observe Claude Gerard; *I watched him like a spy* and with some degree of dislike. He was henceforth to become *my master*, and whilst he was alone, I wanted to detect in his countenance, whether he was a different man from what he had shown himself to me.

"Seated at a table with his elbow thereon, and his forehead resting on his left hand, he was slowly writing something with his right.

"After a few moments, the pen seemed to sink from his hand; then, letting his head fall backwards, he remained motionless in that posture for some time, his two stiffened hands, strongly pressed to his temples, and to my extreme surprise I beheld his face bathed in tears. He was looking up to heaven with a most piteous expression.

"But soon after Claude Gerard, wiping his eyes with the back of his hand, stood up and walked up and down with a hurried step.

"Curious, and yet uneasy, I observed his every move. When he had thus paced the chamber, he came up to the open window, and after a long pause of silence broken by his deep sighs, he said:

"'Alas! the poor child won't return—he is lost—I was mistaken.'

"And he closed the little window.

"My distrust, my stealthy after thoughts submitted a second time to the mild and austere attraction inspired by Claude Gerard. In order to prevent his suspecting me of playing the spy, I waited for a few moments before tapping at the panes.

"Hardly had I touched them with a timid hand, before the window was re-opened.

"I think I hear again the exclamation of surprise and joy which greeted my return.

"I leaped into the room. Claude Gerard hugged me to his noble heart with inexpressible delight.

"'God be praised,' he said;—'no, no, I was not mistaken. Poor dear boy, I had judged you aright.'

"But he soon added after reflection:

"'Where are your companions? your example did not influence them.'

"I related to Claude Gerard the fruitfulness of my search, and showed him with a shudder the bloody shawl and the three pieces of silver.

"'A crime may have been committed,' said he to me with a grave and pensive look. 'To-morrow, without compromising you as an accomplice of the theft, I will try and unfold this mystery. Be composed, my child, and above all, go and rest yourself, after the painful shocks you have experienced this day; fling yourself upon my bed; you will sleep better there: as for me, I will lie down in the cow-stall. Endeavour to sleep; to-morrow you shall tell me your past history, and determine for the future. So good night! what 's your name?'

"'Martin, sir.'

"'Martin!' cried Claude Gerard, turning pale: 'Martin!' he repeated, with an expression that cannot be defined. 'And do n't you know either your father or your mother?'

"'No, sir; as far back as I can remember, I served as a help to a bricklayer, after which I was picked up by some show-men, whom I deserted a few months ago, to beg with my companions.'

"'I was mad,' said Claude Gerard, speaking to himself. 'What an idea! it 's impossible. But that name—what does it imply? the singular interest I feel for this child—what can it mean? But I should have felt the same interest for any other poor creature about to fall into the same abyss. But that name—that name: I think it will induce me to love the boy still more.'

"'Then turning to me:

"'Can't you recollect any circumstance relating to——but no, sleep—sleep, to-morrow will be time enough to chat.'

"'I have no wish to sleep, sir; I feel too sorrowful.'

"'Well, relate to me as well as you can, briefly, in a few words, but very candidly, your whole life up to this day.'

"So I related it fully to Claude Gerard, with the single reserve of my love for Regina.

"My candid and sincere narrative alternately softened and irritated my new master; he testified the greatest horror for La Levrasse, Mother Bigbone, and such like; and his heart was rent for the fate of poor Basquine. If he accused Bamboche, he also pitied him. During my story, Claude Gerard several times repeated that he bitterly regretted the departure of my two friends, as he was persuaded they might both be brought to a sense of their errors.

"When I came to speak of our last attempt, in order to obtain the assistance of the *richlings* we had met in the forest of Chantilly, I uttered the name of Viscount Scipio Duriveau, a name and title which we had often repeated together—my companions and I—whether to make game of a title given to a child, or to recapitulate the insolence and ill-nature of that richling.

"Scarcely had I pronounced the name of Duriveau, before Claude Gerard leaped up in his chair: his features bespoke a most acute suffering, as suddenly as if he had been shot through the heart.

"After a long pause of dejected silence, he said to me with a bitter smile:

"'You too pronounce the name of Duriveau with grief and aversion, do you not?'

"'Why,' said I to him, astonished at the question, 'that little Viscount, as the servants call him, was so ill-natured, so contemptuous to me.'

"'Well,' cried he, 'and I also pronounce that name with grief—with aversion: it will be another link to unite us.'

"'Do you know then that little Viscount, sir?' replied I: 'and was he contemptuous and spiteful to you as well?'

"'No; but his father—oh! his father, I never can——'

"Then, interrupting himself, and sweeping his hand over his brow, the schoolmaster said, shrugging his shoulders:

"'Really—really my feelings get the better of me. What was I going to tell that child? Oh! these thoughts—these recollections!'

"He sighed deeply, and said to me·

"'Go on, my child.'

"I concluded my confession by relating what had happened to us since our adventure with the richlings; vagrancy, beggary, theft: I told all.

"After listening to me with interest, Claude Gerard embraced me, saying:

"'I now congratulate myself still more, if possible, my child, to have come to your relief. A little time longer spent in wandering, would have rendered your recovery hopeless, or at least very difficult. That which has sustained you, that which has almost preserved you, do you know what it was?—the friendship, the deep and devoted affection you felt for your friends, and which they likewise returned. The presence of but one good and generous sentiment in their hearts and your own has proved sufficient to save all your souls from being utterly depraved. Yes, it is because you *loved* that you have continued better than so many others similarly situated. Oh! LOVE be for ever blessed!' said Claude Gerard, with an ineffable expression: '*as it is able to save a man, so it would be able to save the race from which he springs.*'

"I don't know how it was, but the language of that excellent man reminded me still more painfully of the loss of my companions than I had hitherto felt it myself: so I burst into tears.

"'What 's the matter?' he kindly inquired.

"'Nothing, sir,' said I to him, endeavouring to restrain my tears, lest I might offend my master with the sight of my regret.

"'Come, my boy,' said Claude Gerard to me, in that mild and penetrating voice, the influence of which I already felt, 'begin to accustom yourself to tell me every thing. If you thought wrong, or did wrong, I won't blame you. I will show you your error, and tell you why it is one.'

"'Well, sir, when I found this shawl to-night, and those three pieces of money in the midst of a pool of blood; when, after calling out for my companions, no answer was returned to me, I felt a very bitter sorrow; it was like the giddiness of grief; but now, I think my distress is greater than ever.'

"'And so it must be, my boy; nor need you wonder at it; your affliction will still increase. It is neither to-day nor to-morrow that you will feel most keenly the absence of your companions. The change of life, your new duties may divert you at first; but it will be after a certain lapse of time, and especially on those days when sadness and dejection shall visit you, as at times they visit us all, that you will most bitterly regret and mourn for your little friends. When friendship is nurtured, as in your case, from childhood, and amidst misfortune and perils endured and ventured upon in common, it leaves an ineradicable root in the heart; and in the mind a memory that no time can efface: after ten years' or twenty years' separation, if you were to meet once more the companions of your early youth, your affection for them would be as lively as at present.'

"I looked at Claude Gerard with uneasiness; he resumed after a pause:

"To any one else I might speak otherwise; but from the story of your earliest life, from the knowledge I think I have of your character already, I am convinced that you have sufficient courage, and strength of mind, and good sense also, to hear the truth without any disguise; yes, you are sensible enough to be told of certain unavoidable hardships which you will have to endure, but which then, at any rate, will not surprise you. Once more, Martin, promise to tell me your troubles, your doubts, and your evil thoughts—if you should have any. Above all promise to tell me, in case the lot I offer you shall appear too hard—too wretched, to tell me so frankly instead of furtively escaping; because then I will try to settle you in a manner better suited to your tastes and your inclinations, which at first I must find out. Come, my boy, the day will very soon break. Try, to rest yourself a little, I am also in want of sleep. Good night, Martin.'

"And then the worthy schoolmaster having obliged me to lie down upon his pallet, blew out the light; soon after I heard him stretch himself down on a litter in the stable.

"It was in vain I tried to sleep, though I was drowsy; for I was too much agitated: I began to ruminate on the language of Claude Gerard.

"It was a strange thing, perhaps for the very reason that by showing me the future in its gloomy colours, he had not been afraid to trust to my fortitude, bent of mind, and judgment. I felt encouraged, exalted in my own esteem, and ready to confront that future, the severity of which he had not concealed from me; my curiosity was likewise strongly excited by the manner in which Claude Gerard had listened to the wild and disorderly maxims of the Rump-in-the-Bowl, of whom I had cursorily spoken to him, and whose disciple I had partly become; my new master did not condemn these principles—he did not rail against them: he merely received them with a mournful smile. I strove to account for this apparent toleration by arguing that Claude Gerard's condition was, no doubt, an ad-

ditional proof of the Rump-in-the-Bowl's theory; for although I scarcely knew my protector as yet, the rectitude, the elevation of his thoughts were a sufficient warrant of his goodness and greatness of soul, whilst all around him testified to the wretchedness, the poverty, the privations he endured.

"Overcome with fatigue, I fell asleep amidst these reflections; but it was only a light and restless sort of slumber; for about two hours after, I was awakened by the noise which Claude Gerard made as he entered my room, and yet he had taken care to enter on tiptoe.

"I sat up in the bed immediately. Those two hours' rest had appeased and refreshed my whole frame.

"'I did not intend to awake you,' said the schoolmaster: 'but the mischief is done; endeavour to go to sleep again.'

"'Thank you, sir, I have slept enough for to-day; if you have any orders to give me, here I am—quite ready.'

"And I got upon my feet.

"'No, my boy; at present I have a sad duty to fulfil.'

"'To dig the grave of that poor lady?' said I.

"'Who told you so?' inquired he, surprised.

"'Yesterday,' replied I, looking down, 'when you shut me up in that little lodge, to run out after my companions, I saw a fat dumpy woman come into the yard, to ask for you, and when you returned I heard all she said.'

"'Good! now I understand; well, my boy, it is as you say: I am going out to dig a grave.'

"'Will you take me with you, sir? I can assist you, and I had rather go with you than stay by myself.'

"'Be it so,' returned the schoolmaster with a melancholy smile. 'And, since you will have, for some time at least, to live with me and partake in my duties, this day, which will be rather a heavy one, shall serve as a trial for you—a probation. Come along then, my little Martin.'

"I followed him with my eyes: he fetched a pick-axe and a spade out of the cow-stall.

"'Shall I carry these tools, sir?'

"'Take the spade, boy; it is the lighter of the two.'

"I took up the spade accordingly. My master walked on a few paces, and as he passed by the stable-door, he met the cowherd, who said to him very familiarly, and with a loud hoarse laugh—

"'You will have a full school-room to-day, Claude Gerard.'

"'How is that, my lad?'

"'You will have more scholars to-day than yesterday.'

"'Explain your meaning. What scholars are you speaking of?'

"'Hi, hi, hi! my cows, to be sure.'

"'Your cows? but for several days they have always been sent out to grass at school-time.'

"'Yes; but my master said to me:—'For the sake of the pittance that my cattle browse in the fields in winter for three or four hours, I lose the best part of the dung. So they shall remain in the stable throughout the whole cold season, without once coming out.'

"'Well! my lad,' said Claude Gerard, 'you must leave your cows in the stable, and I will do my best to prevent my scholars from being disturbed by their neighbours,' added he smiling.

"Then turning to me—

"'Now, Martin, my boy,—come along.'

"So, shouldering the spade, I went out, following the instructor, who took the pick-axe under his arm.

"This grave-digging schoolmaster,—this academy held in a cow-stall—such things, in spite of my ignorance of the world, appeared very singular to me. Two or three times I was near expressing my astonishment to Claude Gerard; but I was too timid, and I soon reached the village churchyard along with him.

CHAPTER XII.

A LETTER, WRITTEN, NOT BY THE DEVIL AS AT FIRST MIGHT APPEAR, BUT BY A CLERGYMAN, WHO MUST HAVE BEEN HIS MINISTER.

BEFORE I relate the incidents of this remarkable day which has left in my mind some recollections which cannot be obliterated and a deep and wholesome impression in my heart, I think it proper to lay before the reader a few fragments of a correspondence which by singular chance came afterwards into my possession.

"These scraps of a tattered letter, which was written shortly before my meeting with the schoolmaster, will serve to explain the patience with which he submitted and resigned himself to the most apposite functions, the most painful, the most disgusting offices, and the violent hatred which that touching forbearance inspired in his oppressors.

"That letter was directed to a person whom I did not know at the time, and whom I have never since discovered; it was written by the abbot Bonnet, the curate of the parish in which the excellent Claude Gerard resided as a schoolmaster.

"What can be the reason of this remorseless hostility between religion and knowledge? It has lasted for ages! It prevails every where. It grows more bitter every generation. There must be some truth as large as this animosity contained within the enigma if any man had the sagacity to penetrate within the mystery, and the honesty to reveal it afterwards.

"These are the fragments:

"——In a word, it is intolerable——it is impossible to catch this Claude Gerard tripping at any time; he is always satisfied, he resigns to every new trial with a patient submission which, in a man of his acquirements, cannot be taken for any thing else but supreme disdain. Mr. Claude Gerard no doubts fancies himself of too high and too exalted a nature to feel humbled by any treatment. He performs the vilest, the most abject duties with a serene composure which quite perplexes me; not only does he submit to all the duties which belong to his functions as a schoolmaster, but he moreover finds means to execute certain exactions of mine, which I did hope he would have declined (and he might have done it) in order that I might have been armed with some pretext against him; but he is too artful to allow it, and by his disdainful, his diabolical submissiveness he compels me to confess my obligations to him. * * Perhaps I may wear out his patience at last; I must at least hope to do it. * * * * So the first thing we must attempt to do, is to degrade him in the eyes of the people. It will be no easy matter; for there is not one even of the most loathsome labours he is charged with, but he has the art to dignify it by the lofty sedateness with which he performs it before every spectator. This is another link by which he unites and binds to himself all that plebeian scum devoted of necessity to the coarsest toil. He sets himself, above all, to point out to these people the utility of a task. In this manner he contrives to do himself honour, and to obtain honour from others by submitting to the most repugnant offices. How is such a man to be degraded?'

"What more shall I say? That pitiful fellow, with his invariable gentleness—his obedience—his tatters—his wooden shoes—his pallet—his black bread, and pure water—drives me to desperation. He is in my way,—he haunts me: he taunts me in

the most insulting and bitter manner: not that I know him to have ever dared to utter a word of reproach as to me,—*but this austerity*, this resignation which he affects, joined to his extensive knowledge and rare understanding, looks like a standing protest to tax and accuse my mode of life, the sort of ease and comfort I enjoy, thanks to the liberality of the excellent Count of Stopall, the pearl of my parishoners; but I fear * * * *

* * * * * *

"We shall require some very grave reason to enable us to remove Claude Gerard from this parish, to which he is attached by a thousand ties very strong, though invisible. He exercises a kind of influence over every one; and those over whom that influence is mightiest are the last to perceive it, because the clowns live with him familiarly; they do n't suspect that he is their master. You can't imagine the number of domestic quarrels and neighbourly feuds which he settles, or the law-suits which he prevents; he gives the small tenantry the most perfidious counsels relative to their landlords; for he possesses the infernal art of never over-stepping the limits of the law for which he ever feigns the greatest reverence.

"All this tallies with my assertion: this man enjoys a very great popularity; this must first be destroyed: there lies the whole question.

"I had hoped to detect some ground of complaint in respect to his frequent absences, which lasted a part of the night; for, not to fail in any of his duties he would borrow from his rest the necessary time for those excursions.

"But I found out his riddle: he used to go, they told me, once a week, to the mad-house situated in your town. I have made my inquiries of the governor of that asylum. And truly Claude Gerard does go almost regularly once a week; he has so greatly bewitched the governor, that the rules of the house are broken in his case, and they allow him to enter rather late at night.

"The person he visits so assiduously is a woman between twenty-six and twenty-seven, who, in spite of her madness, is, they say, very beautiful. Though she does not appear to recognise Claude Gerard, the sight of him, however, operates upon her most favourably: she becomes calmer after his visits; and therefore the physician not only suffers them, but desires their continuance.

"As this woman is admitted to the house through charity, she is in want of many comforts, and yet every now and then Claude Gerard contrives by imposing privations on himself, to leave a little money, not much it is true, to defray the whims of that maniac.

"From all this what can we conclude against

Claude Gerard? Nothing, apparently but what is honourable; still is it evident that his prime reason for wishing to stay in our parish is because it lies so near to the town where that mad woman is confined.

"They tell me likewise,—but this unhappily does not bear against him,—that before this woman was thus afflicted, he had been violently attached to her, but that she deserted him for another; and that, by reason of her passion for her second lover she had gone out of her mind.

"No doubt this disappointment is partly the cause of the deep and constant melancholy which manifestly preys upon the mind of Claude Gerard, in spite of his affected composure.

"I have already told you of Claude Gerard's influence over the common people: I must now acquaint you with the influence he has over people of a higher class; which will naturally lead me to explain to you afterwards how and why I fear he will filch from me that good and excellent Stopall.

"You are aware that for a long time past the rich landowners have resisted and struggled hard against the establishment of a primary school in this parish. They were right, for *they understood how dangerous it is to enlighten a population: it gives them the capacity to count their numbers, to come to a mutual understanding, to concert measures together, and to exult over those execrable books and newspapers which are printed in these times. Now according to me, and according to those prudent landowners, the education of the people ought never to extend beyond the catechism orally delivered by the priest.**

"Unfortunately the force of things has determined otherwise. The government religion has been outrun by a set of clamorous pamphleteers; so we have been compelled to tolerate primary schools.

"You will readily conceive that every means were practised, for a long time, to render the measure completely vain. But at length driven into last intrenchments, we confined the school to an unhealthy infectious stable, and the allowance for each child was limited to *one half-penny a month*; which reduced the annual income of the schoolmaster to about fifty francs; moreover, the said schoolmaster was bound to perform the most humiliating offices. Claude Gerard's predecessor stood the trial only three months, and then threw up the place; the school then continued closed for two years; it required a man like this Claude Gerard to come and confront, and submit to so much poverty, so much disgust, and so many annoyances with the insulting self-denial that he defies us with.

"Among the rich landowners of the country, there was one good natured man, to whom I had easily explained the danger that lurked in the education of the people. I did not for a moment suspect him of yielding, when, by some fatality or other, he one day fell in with our schoolmaster.

"Can you guess what was the consequence? After two hours' conversation my man was entirely changed, thanks to the schoolmaster's diabolical artifices.

"This is what the poor dupe said to me the same evening:

"'Well! Mr. Priest, I have met with that poor Claude Gerard. Do you know he speaks like an oracle, and gives most excellent reasons in support of popular instruction.'

"'Either you have a brotherly fellow feeling with the people,' said the schoolmaster to me, 'and then you ought to let him have the same instruction as you receive yourself, since education makes people better and more moral; for, out of twenty criminal offenders there is but one who can read or write.'

"Or on the other hand you consider the people, I won't say as an enemy, but as an antagonist whose interests are contrary to yours. If so, why educate him the more; for then, instead of having to dread an enemy whom poverty and ignorance may render wild, stupid, brutish, and savage, you will have an adversary to whose sentiments, to whose judgment, to whose heart, and to whose reason you may appeal, because you have enlightened him.

"Well! sir, said the dupe, this simple language has struck me, and that so forcibly, that I blushed for shame on beholding a man so learned, so mild, so patient, and industrious as Claude Gerard, clad like a beggar, with wooden shoes on his feet, and compelled to teach within a stable. I am therefore determined to be at the expense of a more suitable locality, and to raise the salary of the instructor to a sufficient sum to enable him to live decently at least.

"I looked at the dupe with amazement.

"'You cannot be in earnest,' said I to the perverted victim.

"'I am so serious, my dear sir, that I have already cast my eyes upon a house which I think will answer.

"Fortunately, Providence came to our relief: the death of an uncle suddenly called the poor dupe away to Paris; and Claude Gerard still gives his lessons in a putrid stable, which affects the health of his scholars, and often visits them with fevers; and yet, for all that, the diabolical school is constantly well attended."

EXTRACTS FROM THE OFFICIAL REPORT.

"Mr Lorrain, in his excellent official work, already quoted, when he has to complain of a systematic resistance to popular education, thus expresses himself:—

"'But it is often among men who are the strongest supporters of government, that we hear of objections against the law; sometimes they borrow from the agricultural interest:—'*When all the village lads shall be able to read and write, where shall we find hands to work?*'—'We want *husbandmen*, not *readers*,' said another landowner. '*Instead of losing their time at school, let them go and clear out a ditch*,' said a citizen of Gers. Sometimes a ridiculous pride induces the comfortable farmers not to send their children to sit down on the same bench with the poor. To read, write, and cypher, is in their eyes a sign or index of easy circumstances, as it is to be able to ride on a nag to market, whilst the poor man trudges on foot; or to have a seat of one's own at church, instead of kneeling on the floor.'

"And again:

"'There is another cause which obstructs the march of education: *it is the influence exercised in certain districts by gentlemen of rank and fortune; these people pretend that it is useless to teach those peasants to read whose lot it is to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.*—(ARDENNES, canton of Mizieres, page 185). The wealthy landowners say that they have no thoughts of promoting the education of the poor children of their parish. *If they did so, they argue, nobody would be found to till the land.* (Gironde, p. 166.)

"'Unfortunately, the force of things has settled the point: the government religion has been overtaken by rash and illiterate pamphleteers, and we have been compelled to put up with the primary school.

* A set of very strong extracts from the official report is here given by this intrepid advocate of the people, and as they are really too important to be thrown aside, we shall endeavour to find room for them at the end of this chapter. The least observation will show the reader that notwithstanding the lofty ability and fine powers of Eugene Sue, the noble uprightness with which this able public functionary has performed his task has enabled him to keep pace with the great romancist on the important subject of public instruction, and to point his wand to the ulcers of the social system with regard to education, in as forcible a manner as Sue himself.—*Translator's note.*

"'*We will not educate poor children*, says the landowner, *because the cultivation of our estates would be abandoned and the children would go into trade* (Gers).

"'(Dordogne).—The inhabitants of a higher class are not in general favourable to the increase of primary schools, *as they are convinced that a peasant who possesses more than a certain degree of knowledge, becomes a man of no account* (p. 185).

"'(Drome).—Rich families here are not inclined to encourage primary schools, and loudly proclaim that they dread to see education diffused among the poorer classes (p. 187).

"'(Cher).—Many landlords who have no aversion to government, but who, above all, are the friends of peace and order, are uneasy to witness the spread of elementary education at a time when newspapers abound; they dread the village lawyers, as they style them. These landlords, observes the inspector, in his report, do not yet rightly understand that the *village lawyers* owe their pernicious influences solely to the *monopoly* of reading and writing, and that when once these resources shall be common to all, they will no longer avail the few to the prejudice of the many (p. 188).

"'(Charente).—It is but too true, in the main, that the rich and comfortable proprietors are unwilling to see the poor receive the benefits of education like their own children (p. 188).'"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SCHOOLMASTER PLAYS THE PART OF GRAVE-DIGGER, AND THE LITTLE BOY MARTIN MEETS WITH AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE OF BAMBOCHE'S.

"THE sun was just rising as Claude Gerard and I, after having lingered a moment at the house of the deceased, arrived together at the churchyard,—a poor cemetery too it was, where a few mean-looking crosses alone were seen to rise up half hidden by the dank tall grass, with here and there a few cyprus trees. Towards the middle of the cemetery, on a gentle eminence, there still remained a large patch of ground untenanted. The schoolmaster bent his way to it, and said to me:

"'Come, my boy, let 's to work: the thaw has luckily softened the earth. I will dig—you shall lift out the mound with the shovel. Let us make haste, for the body will soon be here.'

"Then he added partly to himself:

"'Dead but yesterday — buried this morning! Fortunately my mind has been relieved as to this dangerous precipitancy which sometimes causes such fearful calamities.'

"'What calamities, sir?'

"'Alas! my poor child, some people by this means have been buried alive.'

"Alive!' cried I, with affright.

"'Yes—merely plunged into a profound state of lethargy; then came the moment of revival,' said Claude Gerard, shuddering—'yes, of revival; in a close narrow bier, with six feet of earth pressing upon it.'

"'Oh! it 's frightful!' exclaimed I; 'and do you fear that, this time also?'

"'Compose yourself, my child; if I had any such fear, I would not fill up the grave, and I would watch; but, just now, I visited the deceased's house, inquired fully into every circumstance of the death. The physician of the neighbouring town, a most learned man, has certified to the decease, and this declaration from a man like him can leave no doubt behind. Poor woman! she required, they say, to be buried in a splendid dress, with all her ornaments, formerly worn by her; probably some valued occasion was connected with this desire. Come, my boy, to work.'

"The schoolmaster then flung down his straw hat, turned up the sleeves of his blouse, and began to dig the earth with a vigour and dexterity which bespoke a long practice of manual labour. I did my best to assist him according to my strength.

"'It 's the grave of a martyr that we are digging, child,' said he to me, a few moments after as, he wiped off with the back of his hand the sweat which was running down his brow.

"'The grave of a martyr?' said I to him.

"'Yes—of a woman who counted almost each day of her life with her tears, though she was a great lady. Ah! my boy, there are other sorrows than those beneath the rags of the poor.'

"'And who caused her to suffer so much distress, poor lady?'

"Whether Claude Gerard did not hear my question, or whether he did not think fit to answer it, he stooped his head and betook himself again to digging; and soon after he resumed with a sigh:

"'God send that her daughter may be happier than she was.'

"'Has she a daughter?'

"'One about your age. She arrived here a few days ago. They had long separated her from her mother; but when the wretched woman felt that she was dying, she entreated and implored them so eagerly to send for her child, that she was obeyed. Alas! she did not long enjoy her presence. Poor mother—poor mother! and her daughter too, what a cruel trial for her strength.'

"'Why so, sir?'

"'She will have to follow her mother's body to this grave.'

"'Indeed!' cried I with a shudder, 'she will require all her strength.'

"'You have been very unfortunate,' said Claude Gerard to me; 'a hard and laborious life will be yours, well! for all that, your lot will probably be less painful than that of the poor girl who will soon follow her mother's remains to this spot; and yet she is rich, and will never know any want.'

"'Alas! my God, if the rich are not happy themselves, who then can be so?'

"'Those will be happy, my boy, who can say to themselves: I have fulfilled a duty—I have performed a useful task, how humble soever it may be; I have lent a helping hand to one that was weaker or more unfortunate than myself—I have injured no one—I have forgiven my enemy the injury he had done me.'

"These noble maxims, so strongly contrasted with those of the Rump-in-the-Bowl, already so deeply rooted in my mind by his pupil Bamboche, that they rather astonished than convinced me. No doubt, Claude Gerard guessed my thoughts, for he continued with much gentleness:

"'One day, I trust, you will understand me; and to-night, after our day's work, the first day you will have passed without having before you the example of vice, you shall tell me all you think, all you feel; and who knows? perhaps you may begin already to feel yourself less unhappy, though your privations are the same.'

"Thus whilst we discoursed, the grave had been thoroughly dug up; Claude Gerard had but just issued from the pit, when we heard at a distance the funeral chant accompanied by the gloomy strains of the winding horn.

"'The body is approaching,' said the schoolmaster; 'our task is finished just in time.'

"Hard by the grave stood a large cyprus tree, stunted and full of branches, against which my master ordered me to put the pickaxe and shovel. From that spot, which was slightly raised, I saw the funeral procession: it consisted of a priest in his surplice, a chanter, a chorister, and a child with the horn. Four peasants, attired in their frocks, carried the bier by means of two cross poles with a man to each end.

"Two persons only followed the coffin: one of them was a woman in black, who led a little girl by the hand, likewise dressed in mourning. At the distance where I stood it was impossible to see their faces.

"Claude Gerard, who stood up behind the grave, considered the mournful cavalcade with a look of the deepest affliction.

"'Poor creature!' said he; 'pursued, and indignantly treated to the last. Had it not been for her child and this old servant, there had been none to attend the body.'

"The few words he had said to me about the defunct woman, pressed heavily upon my heart. It seemed to me that I was no longer altogether a stranger to these rites, and that I had in a manner a claim to partake in them.

"The procession disappearred for a few minutes behind the hedge which skirted the cemetery; but soon the sounds came nearer, the pall entered the ground; the two mourners were at first concealed from me by the priest and the pall-bearers; but on turning the angle of the path, I recognised Regina. An elderly female accompanied her.

"But for the trunk of the green tree against which I was leaning, I must have fallen back in my wonder and alarm. Fortunately my master could not notice my confusion: he was still on the edge of the grave which it was his duty to fill again after assisting to let down the body.

"Trembling lest I might be seen and recognised by Regina, I ran behind the trunk of the tree, and squatted down on my knees, hardly daring to breathe.

"Regina's face was as white and passive as marble; her three dark spots lent a singular expression to her pale set features; she shed no tears; her dry and steadfast look was so obstinately rivetted to the coffin, that whenever the broken steps of the bearers imparted the least oscillation to the right or to the left a slight inclination of the lovely child's head attested that her heart went with it.

"Every move of the child exhibited the rigid motion of an automaton; she walked—so to speak—by jerks, as if her whole being had been under the influence of a fitful tension. When I remembered the brutal manner in which I had carried off Regina in the forest of Chantilly, I likewise remembered her beauty; now seeing her so cruelly altered, my heart was bursting; and I was obliged to put my hand up to my mouth to stifle my sobs.

"The aged female, who held Regina's hand, was weeping bitterly. Her countenance was mild and benevolent. It seemed to me that the priest read the prayers over the body hastily and abstractedly. When the moment came to lower the body into the grave, Regina seemed to bend and sink within herself. The old servant was obliged to support her by holding her under her arms. And yet how singular! the child did not shed a single tear; her eye continued fixed, her features set and passive, and scarcely did her thin white lips contract themselves now and then, as they pressed upon each other.

"At length the coffin was placed at the bottom of the pit.

"Regina then seemed to make a violent effort; she disengaged herself from the attendant, knelt down on the edge of the gaping pit, whilst the schoolmaster began to drop a few shovel-fulls of earth, which sent back a dumb and gloomy sound.

"At each of these falls of earth, Regina sent a farewell kiss to the coffin with an expression of despair so mournful and congealed—that it rent the heart a thousand times more than the most bitter sobs.

"Long before the grave was filled up, the curate walked hurriedly away, followed by the chanter; the chorister who bore the cross flung it over his shoulder; the horn-blower threw his instrument round his neck, and they went out of the churchyard without any order.

"Regina and the servant alone lingered by the grave, which the schoolmaster was filling up; the child still remained kneeling, and mute and immoveable as a statue.

"My attention was diverted from this contemplation by a trivial circumstance. I felt a sharp strong smell of tobacco; I turned to look at the side whence the smell proceeded, and I perceived the dark head of a man overlooking the hedge; he had a most ferocious, forbidding look; he was quietly smoking his pipe; his complexion was of the colour of brickdust, and his hair, which was turning grey, was scarcely covered with a shabby cap.

"In spite of the painful sight before him, the hideous features of the man bespoke a disregard so callous, that, overcome with disgust, and indignation, I turned my head away to look again at Regina.

"The schoolmaster having concluded his task, was, like me, silently contemplating the still kneeling girl. The old servant whispered something to her; but Regina, making a sign with her hand, as if to entreat her, sunk again into her former state of rigid grief.

"Again, and almost in spite of myself, I cast my eyes towards the spot where I had beheld the sinister visage of the man, but he was gone.

"Suddenly I heard the tingling of the small bells of a post-chaise which was galloping along.

"At that sound, unnoticed by Regina, the old servant started, cast a painful look at the child, and again whispered something to her, but as vainly as before.

"The carriage stopped at the entrance of the cemetery.

"Soon after an aged mulatto, dressed in black, and holding a small mantle, and a child's hat, he advanced towards the servant and said to her drily:

"'Now then, Gertrude, the ceremony is over; you know the baron's orders.'

"Gertrude pointed out to him with a supplicating look little Regina on her knees.

"'She won't stay there all day, I hope?' said the mulatto.—'A quarter of an hour more or less don't signify;—and, you know the baron's orders are very prerremptory.'

"'Regina,' said the old servant sobbing, 'we must go; you will make yourself ill. Come, come.'

"The child merely shook her head in dissent, and stayed motionless.

"'We cannot drag her from her mother's grave,' said Gertrude to the mulatto; 'what can I do?'

The mulatto shrugged his shoulders, and, approaching the child said to her.

"'Young lady, I am instructed to carry you home as soon as all that is over. Your father, the baron, will have it so. So be good enough to follow me.'

"Regina did not heed him.

"'Young lady,' resumed the mulatto, 'I beg you to come, or I shall be obliged to force you away.'

"The child did not stir.

"'We must put an end to this, however,' said the mulatto.

"Hereupon he drew still closer to her, no doubt to raise her in his arms.

"I expected now to see tears, and a painful struggle, but no such thing.

"The lovely child allowed herself to be lifted from the ground without any resistance, and without saying a word.

"All she did was, when the mulatto had taken her in his arms, to turn her head to the grave, upon which she persisted to fix a steady look, like the one with which she had followed the body. So long as she was able to see the fresh mound, the child kept looking on, sending from time to time a last farewell kiss.

"Soon after Gertrude and the mulatto, bearing off Regina in his arms, turned along the hedge, and were out of sight.

"A few minutes later, the horses, driven at full speed, bore away the carriage.

"This singular scene, so utterly unexpected, struck me like an apparition or a dream.

"It was necessary for the schoolmaster to speak to me twice to rouse me out of my stupor. He appeared himself as deeply moved as I was; and in our heedless abstraction, we forgot to bring away the pickaxe and shovel which we left at the foot of the cyprus tree, whilst we returned to the village.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SCHOOLMASTER—THE VILLAGE SCHOOL—AND THE SCHOLARS.

"'REGINA'S mother is dead; and however unfortunate your condition may be, it is, perhaps, still less so than that reserved for this poor child,' Claude Gerard had said to me. This idea contained in itself the whole of the mournful scene I had just witnessed.

"And yet was I able to shake off this engrossing idea, and acquit myself, to my master's great satisfaction, of my part of the daily duties, by postponing to the solitary hours of the night, the melancholy pleasure of leisurely indulging in the many various fancies which the spectacle I had beheld had given birth to.

"Besides the variety of my employment during the remainder of the day, the surprise I felt as I witnessed several particulars in the condition of Claude Gerard, the schoolmaster, would have been sufficient, I imagine, to divert my attention from the subject of Regina. I also learned, in the course of the morning, that she was not to return to the village: the house in which her mother had lived, till her death, was about to be sold by auction.

"Such was the employment of the parish schoolmaster's days. Save a little difference in his manual labour, his days almost all were thus distributed.

"After the burial we returned home. Claude Gerard provided himself with a large wooden rake, at the end of a lengthy pole: he gave me a pail to carry, and a hollow shovel, such as sailors use to stanch the water in their boats,—and we set out; I for my part curious to know what we were going to do,—the schoolmaster sedate and serious, according to his custom.

"In a few minutes after, we had reached a small meadow skirting the village, at the further end of which a subterranean spring served to replenish the public wash-water: this reservoir was then full of blackish water and slime, and was edged very coarsely round with flat stones to form a kind of parapet.

"Claude Gerard, in spite of the cold, took off his heavy shoes—turned up his trousers to the knees—fastened up his blouse with a piece of string, and then said to me—

"'My boy, we are going to cleanse this wash-water. It would be unhealthy for you to come into the water: I will go in myself, and draw out the mud with this rake;—you will fill this pail with it as I draw it up, and pour it out at the foot of those tall poplar trees yonder.'

"With the greatest simplicity did the schoolmaster give me these directions, and explain his own part of that painful and repugnant duty. In spite of my ignorance of men and things, it seemed to me something truly exorbitant for a schoolmaster to be, not only the grave-digger, but even the mud-raker of his parish. I looked at Claude Gerard with astonishment.

"He guessed my thoughts, smiled benignantly, and said to me—

"'It surprises you, does it not, my boy, to see a schoolmaster—a *learned* man, as they call me—cleansing this wash-water?'

"'Truly, indeed, sir, it does astonish me.'

"'And you think it degrading to me—do n't you?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'And why so?'

"'Why, sir, when a man is learned like you, to plunge into the mire, and gather it up with a large rake, appears to me very humiliating.'

"'Listen to me, boy. The poor women who come to wash their linen in this miry water are obliged to take it home almost as dirty as it was before. Moreover, it contracts a horrid stench of slime: and very often, in consequence, the little children whom they wrap within these damp and fœtid clothes, are taken ill, and suffer from bad fevers: but when once the wash-water is cleansed out, those misfortunes will not occur again.'

"'That 's all very well, sir; but there are many other persons to do this instead of you: and who could not?'

"'Do my business in my stead, you mean.'

"'That 's what I would have said, sir.'

"'You are right; but this is a case of *duty;* I promised to fulfil it, and I must abide by my promise. And as for degradation, where is there any? If I were proud, might I not say, on the contrary, I am at once engaged in doing that which every one can do, and that which every one cannot do; so I profit by it both ways. But, without using this argument, it is enough, my child, for me to reflect that there never can be any degradation in performing a task which is useful and serviceable to every body.'

"I could not find any answer to that.

"'Does the degradation consist in plunging bare-legged into the slime? Come, Martin,' resumed the schoolmaster, smiling; 'those fine, rich, and noble gentlemen, who come every year to hunt over the moor, degrade themselves as much as I do; for they plunge into the slime up to the belly, for the mere pleasure of killing a few poor birds. Come, my boy, cheer up, and be of good heart; our labour will be useful to all: let us make haste,—we must return home by twelve o'clock to get the schoolroom ready.'

"Thereupon, the intrepid philosopher went lustily to work, with strong pulls of the rake, and collected a thick slime upon the shelve of the pool: I filled the bucket with the mud, and then deposited the same along a fine row of poplar-trees.

"I cannot deny, that the example—the language of Claude Gerard, by raising in my esteem the labour I was performing, made it far less irksome and repugnant.

"My new master, still more to encourage me, said to me, after the first hour's work—

"'Martin,—when the spring comes, you and I will visit these poplars. Thanks to the mud that you are laying at their feet, they will flourish and become green and leafy; for this slime, so pernicious to the wash-water, becomes a most excellent manure to feed the roots of these fine trees. Well! tell me, my lad, shall you feel degraded for having assisted and done your part to render these large trees finer and stronger than ever, by emptying a few buckets of mud at their feet?'

"'Oh! no, sir! I shall rather be glad to see them,' cried I, more and more delighted with the schoolmaster's reflections.

"And such is the character of children that it is not without a certain degree of satisfaction and self-love that I concluded a task which at first I had undertaken with disgust.

"If I insist and dwell upon, in this manner, the practical lessons and advices of that able instructor

in humble life, it is because they produced a decisive, and almost a perpetual, effect upon my actions through life. I must say, likewise, to my own credit, or rather to the honour of Claude Gerard, that his simple, clear, and logical arguments entered almost immediately, and deeply, too, into my heart and mind; whilst it was with a certain moral restlessness, with an instinctive disinclination, that I had given credence to the execrable maxims of the Rump-in-the-Bowl, which Bamboche had so recently imparted to me.

"After having thus begun the cleansing of the wash-water, we hastened home again; a hunch of black bread and a handful of walnuts was all our breakfast consisted of, after taking which, I assisted Claude Gerard to lay out the school-room in the stable,—a singular preparation, and which added another to all the bewildering things I had witnessed on that eventful day.

"The cows, not being frequently turned out to grass during the winter season, their habitual presence left but little space for the schoolmaster's pupils. Besides, I *never could altogether settle in my own mind whether I ought to say that the pupils were in the stable or the cows in the school-room*, for the place was so fairly divided between the human species and the brute.

"Thus,—on the right stood the rack, the manger, and an old dung-heap, of three months' standing, which exhaled an insufferable stench; whilst along the left wall, the schoolmaster and I disposed a few ricketty trestles, over which we placed some boards: in front of these moveable tables, we set up several forms on the slimy, fœtid mud of the floor; for the shelving nature of the ground within the stable conveyed to this spot the pestiferous liquids which issued from all the filth of the cattle.

"We made our preparations almost in the dark; —for nothing could be more gloomy than that locality, of about twenty feet in length, lighted on one side only by the stable door, and on the other by the small window of the den, surrounded with hurdles, which was the schoolmaster's bed-room. The low ceiling consisted of disjointed beams, thickly fringed with cobwebs, through whose interstices the straw and hair in the barn overhead were visible.

"When the cold weather came, they used to shut the door; and by that means necessarily two thirds of the stable became plunged in darkness; so that, out of thirty children, not more than five or six could contrive to work by the scanty light which passed through Claude Gerard's small window. The schoolmaster did his utmost to counteract this inconvenience, by summoning in turn each of the children, and hearing their tasks, and setting them to work for a few minutes in his private chamber, and in his own presence.

"Hardly had we laid out this singular school-room, before the children began to appear. The weather, which had been tolerably fair in the morning, was now overcast and colder. The snow soon began to fall in a close heavy shower; it was, therefore, necessary to shut the door of that stable encumbered with children and cattle. After that it became almost as dark as night. Such is the state of elementary education in our enlightened France in the middle of the nineteenth century. Who will blame our patriotism, if, after this, for the sake of humanity, we say—

"'We hope, in this respect, we are behind every other country in Europe!'

"Squatted down in a corner, I partook with lively curiosity in the first lesson I had ever seen given. The rustic scholars of the master, instead of being noisy, clamorous, and stubborn, and considering their school time as a tedious or indifferent employment, were calm, obedient, and attentive. They appeared to me, so to speak, not only to be interested, but pleased and entertained by the instructions of their grave and patient teacher, and to feel for him an almost filial affection.

"Later, I understood, by trying the experiment myself, how it was that by means of a system of education at once simple and ingenious, in which were united *curiosity*, *self-love*, and the *spirit of imitation* (those potent levers for acting on children) Claude Gerard obtained such speedy and satisfactory results. Always kind, sedate, indulgent, and forbearing and conscious of the sanctity of the *sacerdoce* he was exercising, and above all guided and sustained, and encouraged by his intrinsic love of children, he would study their tempers, their impulses, their passions, and knew how to turn to advantage those different natural springs which, if compressed, perverted, or misdirected, would have become so many pernicious vices and evil passions.

"The lesson had lasted about half an hour, when the heat of the stable and the stench from the dung, besides the natural fume from that agglomeration of children, became so deleterious, so suffocating, that I experienced, like several of the scholars, a nausea, a sense of stifling, accompanied with violent headache, and the sweat streamed from my forehead.

"At length it was necessary to open the door, the atmosphere within the stable being not onger fit to breathe. A current of sharp cold air then succeeded abruptly to that stifling temperature: I shivered, and could feel the perspiration freeze upon my brow. A few minutes after the door was closed a second time, but by that time, like all those poor children, so wretchedly clad, I shivered and was chilled. I afterwards learned from Claude Gerard, that these sudden transitions of heat and cold—that the vitiated and infectious air, amidst which those poor creatures lived, frequently brought on serious diseases, which sometimes proved fatal. Seldom it was that the strongest child could continue his attendance for a fortnight together.

"The school ended at last—it was a Saturday night. I shall never forget it, thanks to the following circumstance.

"Claude Gerard took a large bag parted in the centre, so as to form two pouches; he gave me a basket to carry, and said to me:

"'Come, Martin, follow me.' And he smiled as he added:

"'This time, likewise, you will be very much astonished at the humiliation which I must put up with.'

"'How so, sir?'

"'We are going from door to door, throughout the village—to ask for our next week's provision, my child.'

"This speech bewildered me anew.

"'The wages which are allowed me to perform my duties as a schoolmaster, and to attend to those public labours in which you have assisted me, dear boy, are so inadequate, that I am obliged, like my brethren in other parishes, to have recourse to public charity in order to secure my daily bread; then, the greater number of my scholars are so poor, that their parents prefer to pay me their small gratuity in kind.—Come, my boy, speak candidly—does not this appear to you to be the lowest ebb of degradation?'

"'As for me who am accustomed to beg,' replied I, 'I do n't consider that degrading at all;—but you, sir, you who are a scholar and so serviceable to the village——'

"'Exactly so, my boy; I am conscious of rendering some services to every one, and therefore I feel no humiliation when I take from each what he affords me, to enable me to live—since I have no other means of support: if, on the contrary, I was inactive, useless, or idle, I should be committing a degrading cowardice by receiving a bit of bread from poor people. Come along then, my boy; perhaps your evening meal to-day may be somewhat less

scanty than it was yesterday, for my store of provisions was well nigh exhausted.'

"Every moment, I may say, did Claude Gerard give me some new proof of his patient endurance and resignation, combined, however, with a due sense of self-respect. I followed his steps during his round.

"When I recollected at a subsequent period this new incident of that day, and when I came to ponder over it, I was enabled to estimate the regard which other districts must feel for those schoolmasters, who, possessing ample means for doing it, might, in twenty years, change the whole face of a country, and create quite a new generation, by the one single act of education; but no doubt there must be some political reasons which prevent this grand regeneration of society.

"Claude Gerard was generally loved, and even respected; but yet, on account of his miserable and abject poverty, and the singular offices he had to fulfil, he was considered to be on a footing with a good shepherd or an honest and clever ploughboy.

"The poor people especially loved him: it was with brotherly eagerness they tendered to us their humble contribution, one giving a small measure of dry vegetables; another some fruit; a third a little rye, or a stone of potatoes;—in fine, we were, comparatively speaking, far less kindly treated by those villagers who were more independent; for these last felt towards the preceptor a kind of jealous disdain, which manifested itself by many attempts to humble him; but to humble Claude Gerard was no easy matter.

A few small proprietors, belonging to the Curate's, faction looked upon the school with dislike: they thought it useless, unbecoming, and dangerous, to diffuse knowledge among the *populace*, as the proud fools styled the people.—'*If every body could read*,'—said they very ingeniously,—'*how could you distinguish the child of a man who has something from the child of a man who has nothing?*' And thus reasoning, those vain and frivolous dunces concurred with all their might and municipal authority to render Claude Gerard's school abortive, by restricting it to a pestiferous stable, and forbidding their tenantry to send their children to it.

"Among those haughty opponents, our collection was scanty and almost invariably given with an affront. Half of a stale quartern-loaf as hard as a piece of rock, a rancid bit of bacon, or a mouldy cheese,—such was, as nearly as I can remember, the harvest we gleaned among the gentry of the village.

"However, two or three times, in the midst of these brutal insults, all deserted foundling as I was, and though I had lately been a vagrant and a beggar, I felt my heart revolt and my forehead flush with anger as I heard the harsh and contemptuous language which accompanied the disdainful alms they flung to us. But to my increasing amazement, the schoolmaster's invariable serenity never once forsook him; and his attitude, his demeanour, and his countenance, betrayed no sign that he felt or even noticed the insults he received. This consciousness of being above the reach of insult is surely the very highest point of dignity.

We came back to the school, my basket and the schoolmaster's bag nearly full to the mouth.

"The day was drawing to a close; the snow continued to fall very fast; and during our absence it had risen to a heap before the stable-door. Claude Gerard, desiring to clear away the entrance, looked for the shovel we had left in the churchyard, as well as the pickaxe, when we had finished the grave of Regina's mother.

"'The shovel was left lying near the green tree in the cemetery,' said I, to Claude Gerard; 'I will go and fetch it, sir.'

"'Do so, Martin,' answered he; 'for if the snow should gather to a heap outside our stable, when the thaw comes we shall be quite flooded; but are you certain you can find your way again?'

"'Oh! yes, sir; do n't be uneasy,'—and so speaking, I walked rapidly off in the direction of the cemetery.*

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH THE LITTLE BOY MARTIN BECOMES VERY PUGNACIOUS, AND IS NEAR KILLING THE RUMP-IN-THE-BOWL.

"ALTHOUGH the moon was clogged by several thick, hazy clouds, there was still light enough shining forth to guide my way: I could easily distinguish the objects around me.

"So I walked on to the cemetery with a sensation of melancholy contentment. Having been diverted during the day from thinking of Regina, I now gave myself up entirely to her remembrance, and I felt happy to think that I should henceforth live not far from the last resting-place of Regina's mother—that mother whom she so fondly regretted. This was to me both a consolation and another rivet to connect me with that child. I inwardly vowed to watch with pious reverence over that tomb by which I had seen her kneeling: to protect it from the molestation of lazy plants. In the spring I determined to transplant thither some of the prettiest field-flowers, in hopes that if Regina should ever return, she would at least find that grave tended with a care which would touch her gentle heart, and never know the hand of the doer.

"I likewise fancied I saw, I do n't know what singular coincidence, between the unexpected apparition of Regina and the good resolution I had formed to retrace my steps. That marvellous incident looked to me a sort of consecration of this thought: that all my better deeds would draw me closer to Regina.

"Draw me closer to her? No,—that is not the word; for I could not expect to see her again, and far less to approach her;—but still I fancied despite the extravagance of that childish passion, of no avail, that the more I should become an *honest man* the more right I should acquire to think upon Regina.

"At present, ripened by age, I can hardly explain to myself the meaning of these whimsical thoughts, or how so refined a sensibility could have arisen in so young a child as I was; but I am able to account for it, by making allowance for those premature sensations which the example of the amours of Basquine and Bamboche had kindled and developed in me.

"Whilst I gave loose to these reflections, I was slowly stretching towards the churchyard.

"The breeze had already increased, and driven off a part of the clouds which had till then been darkening the moon: it soon glittered with a vivid light,—the snow ceased to fall; but still it covered the whole churchyard like a spacious winding-sheet.

"The deep and solemn silence was only broken by the shrill whistling of the north wind through some green trees.

"I had never been a coward: and moreover my wandering life had long since familiarised me with every kind of nocturnal impressions. The snow covered the ground so thickly, that I walked as upon a carpet, and did not hear my steps.

"In this manner I drew close to the cypress-trees

* Here follows another long series of extracts from some official work, confirming *word for word* all that this red-hearted advocate of the poor has asserted in these astounding scenes. The whole story of the schoolmaster appears to be the said report turned into dialogue, as indeed, all the great novels of Eugene Sue are but animated pictures of real facts made vivid by his stupendous talents.—*Translator's note.*

by the side of which I had left the shovel and the spade, when I hid myself in the morning behind the trunk of that tree during the burial of Regina's mother.

"Suddenly I stopped, struck with astonishment and dread.

"Instead of seeing just before me the grave filled up as we had left it in the morning, and covered with a layer of snow, like the rest of the soil, the pit had been opened;—recently, no doubt; for two heaps of black-coloured mould, rising on either side of that gaping hole, contrasted with the whiteness of the snow which overlayed the ground.

"If that sacrilegious violation had not been practised on the tomb of Regina's mother, perhaps I might have shrunk back at the thought of prosecuting this mysterious search; but indignation and anger gave new courage to my heart. Nevertheless, feeling the necessity of acting prudently, I stole noiselessly on, until I reached the green tree behind which I had skulked in the morning; I found the heavy oak shovel still there; but the pickaxe was gone.

"Up to that time I had heard no noise: I listened attentively, when suddenly I smelt a strong fume of tobacco issuing from the open grave.

"A presentiment came upon me that the man whose forbidding countenance had struck me that morning, and who was coolly smoking his pipe whilst looking on the funeral, was at that moment violating the grave. Next, I heard a kind of grating, followed by several strokes—dumb sounds, which seemed to issue from the bowels of the earth.

"Suddenly, an invisible hand threw the pickaxe over the side of the grave,—then a head rose up—afterwards the bust of a man. He leaned on his hands to get up out of the grave, and had doubtless laid aside his pipe, for between his teeth he held a heavy-looking packet.

"I fully recognised the man I had seen that morning.

"Hidden by the trunk of the cypress-tree, and by the shade it threw forward, I could not be perceived by the malefactor. I stood motionless, uncertain how to act, and waiting for events to guide and direct me.

"That man, whom for the future I shall call the Rump-in-the-Bowl,—that man, the loathsome instructor of Bamboche, having got entirely out of the grave, stood erect for a moment and stretched his tall, robust frame, which had been probably tired by stooping so long. Then, taking in his hand the packet I had noticed, he looked about on every side,—perceived the cypress-tree, behind which I had shrunk asquat, and came up towards it.

"I held my breath,—collected myself into a heap, and made myself as small as I could, in order to lie concealed behind the trunk and the dark shadow of the tree.

"The Rump-in-the-Bowl drew closer still:—I lost all hope.

"Luckily, instead of advancing a few steps further, he sat down on the top of a small slope, and turned his back upon me, whilst he began to undo the packet. It was an old shabby handkerchief, in which were gathered in a heap the articles he had no doubt stolen from the coffin.

"The Rump-in-the-Bowl set the packet on his lap, and busied himself with nicely examining his booty by the light of the moon, and not apprehending any surprise at that hour of the night.

The inspiration I expected from events occurred to me on the sudden: having by some involuntary motion touched and felt the handle of the heavy shovel which I had used in the morning, I got upon my legs, without making the least noise; and favoured by the loud gushes of the wind through the branches of the cypress-tree, I took hold of the spade with both hands, I raised it up in the air like a club, when having measured with my latest glance the space between us—I perceived that in order to make sure of descending with all my might upon his skull, I must perforce make two steps towards him, and come out completely from my hiding-place.

"One moment I faltered—my resolution gave way. The least noise—the least hesitation would have been death; for this was not a man to flinch from murder.

"But the thought of Regina flew to my rescue—I called upon her in my mind as we invoke our guardian angel.

"With one bound I sprang forward; down—down—quickly as lightning, the spade descended on the head of the Rump-in-the-Bowl; and the blow was so fierce and violent, that it broke in two.

"The Rump-in-the-Bowl for a moment raised his arms as if to touch his forehead; then his strength giving way, he fell back senseless on the sod. Fearing I had only stunned him, I dealt him several other blows with furious passion, until the spouting blood had reddened the snow at my feet.

"On seeing the blood I shuddered. I threw away the spade, and quivered with dismay, as if I had committed a crime. But I subdued the feeling by reflecting that after all I had fairly and justly smitten a violator of the grave.

"I approached the Rump-in-the-Bowl, in order to take from him the articles stolen from the body.

"I saw an open jewel-box, from which projected a large gold-chain and a medallion of the same metal; then several rings set with precious stones, doubtless wrenched from the fingers of the corpse; finally, a pocket which the Rump-in-the-Bowl had just opened, for a number of letters had fallen out of it,—and from one of these letters issued a lace of braided hair, to which was suspended a little cross of bronzed steel and a leaden medal as large as a penny-piece.

"My first thought was to pick up those articles, and to carry them immediately to Claude Gerard, and inform him of what had occurred; but the next moment, on reflecting that the Rump-in-the-Bowl might have already stowed some of the jewels in his pockets, I prepared to search him in spite of the dread of doing so. His hand, when I touched it, was frozen, and made me feel bolder. He had on a shabby old jacket and cloth pantaloons. As I was feeling the pockets in his jacket, I chanced to push open his tattered shirt, when, by the light of the moon which was shining at full upon the man, I saw tattooed upon his breast the figure of a death's head, which almost covered the malefactor's chest: the sockets of the head were filled with two blood-red eyes; and a rose was stuck between its teeth.

"'The Rump-in-the-Bowl! the Rump-in-the-Bowl!' repeated I, as I kept kneeling by the man. 'Oh! how glad I am!' cried I with savage extasy, 'I am glad I have killed him, after all the harm he did to Bamboche.'

"I then continued to search the bandit. I found nothing in his jacket except a steel, a tobacco-box, and a clasp-knife: but judge my surprise and my grief when within the flaps of his pantaloons I discovered the two small pistols which, the day before I had seen in Bamboche's possession.

By what strange accident had that man once more encountered Bamboche whom he had been the ruin of? As I thought of the pool of blood in which, the previous night, I had picked up Basquine's shawl and the three five franc pieces, I could not doubt but the Rump-in-the-Bowl was implicated in that crime, since he had got Bamboche's pistols; but I wondered what part the ruffian had played in that tragical event, still shrouded in mystery; for as yet I could not tell whether it was Bamboche or Basquine who had been the victim, or if both had fallen in the same struggle.

"On the other hand, I found no money whatever on the Rump-in-the-Bowl. Then what had become of the large sum stolen by Bamboche from the schoolmaster,—a sum which must have been the only cause of temptation with the presumed murderers of my companions?

"All these ideas presenting themselves to my mind at once, filled it with anxiety and uneasiness. At one time I regretted I had killed the bandit, who was possibly the only one who could clear up the mystery relative to the fate of my two friends; but, when I remembered his life and his crimes, I could not help rejoicing in the deed.

"So I gathered up in the skirt of my blouse the gold chain, the rings, the medallion, and the pocket-book; and likewise the lace of hair with the cross and medal to it; and then, leaving the Rump-in-the-Bowl lying near the open grave, I hurried out of the cemetery to apprise Claude Gerard of the event.

"And now I have a fault to confess—an evil temptation, and a shameful act—yes! an action of which the remorse haunted me up to the day when, far from repenting of what I had done, I rejoiced.

"But alas! the time comes for each particular thing.

"Whatever may have been the consequences which fortune had in reserve for a deed culpable in itself, I could not foresee them at the time I committed it; so that I have no right to attenuate its gravity.

"I was hastening to the schoolmaster's house, looking, as I went along, at the jewels which I had recovered from the Rump-in-the-Bowl: they appeared to me of enormous value.

"'Oh!' thought I to myself; 'could I only meet with Basquine and Bamboche, how we should exult: how we might live and enjoy ourselves for a long time to come with the money this——'

"But here the course of my thoughts was broken; and, in spite of this relapse into my former errors, I felt that to indulge in such thoughts was to me an accomplice with the malefactor in the violation of the grave of Regina's mother: so I repelled the temptation with horror. Then, in spite of myself, I was seized with an idea at once childish and sinful.

"'No, no,' said I; 'I will respect these jewels; but this pocket-book contains letters—of no value at all, since the dampness of the grave would soon have destroyed them: besides, nobody can suspect their existence—nobody will miss them. By keeping them unknown to Claude Gerard, I shall do no injury to any one: it will make me very happy to have them in my keeping: and then, the eager desire to know their contents, *will encourage me more than any thing to learn to read and write.*

"Now that I ponder the matter deliberately, this reason, or rather the excuse, which I lent to cover a guilty temptation, appears to me stupidly puerile and unintelligible; yet nothing can be truer.

"It is certain at least that, from the very next day, I began to read and write with a zeal and perseverance, and with a stubborn assiduity that astonished the schoolmaster. My only object was to be able to read those letters, for I fancied that the information they contained might be a secret link to connect me with Regina, unknown to her—unknown to all.

"I have no desire to palliate this action; all I seek is to recall and candidly avouch the absurd reasons, by which I was driven to commit an action of two-fold guilt, for I did not withdraw the lace of braided hair with the cross and medal which lay mixed with the letters, still pleading as my excuse the moderate value of those articles, and that nobody could suffer by the loss.

"Finally there was another, and probably the most weighty reason for this larceny: the desire to possess something that had belonged to Regina's mother, since I could not hope to get hold of any thing that had belonged to herself.

"So I determined to commit the theft, and before returning home to Claude Gerard, I went into a barn contiguous to our stable, and buried the pocket-book under a load of hay.

"When I entered the schoolmaster's chamber, I found him very uneasy at my long absence, and getting ready to come and look for me. But when after having related to him the violation of the grave, and the malefactor's death I delivered to the schoolmaster the jewels and the case, he tenderly embraced me, alarmed and terrified at the danger I had run, extolled my courage greatly, and went on to say:

"'Although the death even of a great criminal, always devolves upon us a great responsibility, my poor boy—for death is barren in its effects—it does not prevent the commission of crimes, and it renders impossible both repentance and expiation:—still the sight of so profane a deed, the fear of being discovered and killed by the ruffian, make the slaughter sinless. I must go instantly to the mayor to disclose this event, after which I will fill up the desecrated grave again. As for you, my boy, stay here; warm yourself in the stable: you are quite frozen with cold. When I return we will take supper.'

"Claude Gerard set out. I had no spirit to accompany him; for I felt spent and wasted with fatigue and the many shocks I had that day endured.

"As soon as the schoolmaster was gone, my first thought was to secrete the pocket-book I had stolen. After some time rummaging about I first discovered under the manger in the stable, a cracked earthen pot such as is used in that country to preserve milk in: the pocket-book fitted easily into the vase; I deposited it carefully therein; and then I dug a deep hole underneath the manger, close to the wall. After stopping up the mouth of the pot with hay, I put it into the hole and covered it over with the soil.

"That operation once concluded, I sat down upon a bench, and, overcome by fatigue, I soon fell asleep; but it was a restless feverish sleep agitated by fantastic and incoherent dreams. In one of those dreams, my fancy being still haunted with what Claude Gerard had told me about people who were sunk in profound lethargy and buried alive, I thought I saw Regina's mother rise up from the grave, beautiful, and decorated and dazzling to behold; and then looking upon me with ineffable gentleness, she beckoned to me to follow her.

"In the midst of my dream, I was woke up at a start by Claude Gerard, who was shaking me by the arm. I opened my eyes; his blouse was covered with snow; he held a lantern in one hand and a hoe in the other. His face was ghastly pale, and his whole features seemed to be disordered.

"'The malefactor has escaped,' said he, setting down the lantern on the table. 'Your blows could only have stunned him.'

"'Who then?' said I stupefied.

"'The Rump-in-the-Bowl.'

"'Not dead!' I cried.

"'When I left you,' said the schoolmaster, 'I went directly to the mayor; he took two men along with him, and we reached the cemetery. We saw the open grave, and a track of blood on the snow about the cypress tree. Stunned, and doubtless seriously wounded, the bandit must after some time have been revived by the intense cold; we tried to follow his footsteps printed on the snow. We could easily discern that they were draggled and infirm. That track led us beyond the churchyard, into a meadow: but at that point his footsteps became gradually invisible; they were covered with a new layer of snow, which was falling very fast at the time. Soon after the moon went down, as there are spacious woods close to the place where we lost the track of the ruffian, and the night being very dark, we gave up our hopeless search. To-morrow the *gendarmes* will be called out to pursue him. After that I returned alone to the cemetery. The jewels and other articles were replaced in the coffin, and I filled up the grave again.' As he spoke the worthy schoolmaster's voice appeared to me deeply affected.

"By degrees his feelings became so strong, that he stopped and wiped his dripping forehead with his hand.

"'Ah! sir,' said I to him, 'if you only knew what a singular dream I had when you awoke me!'

"'A dream! what was it?'

"'I thought I saw the lady we buried this morning, rise up from her coffin and——'

"'Martin, did you dream that!' exclaimed Claude Gerard amazed, 'did you dream that!' repeated he.

"And as he spoke he fixed on me a look which it is impossible to describe.

"'Yes, sir,' said I, astonished at the importance he seemed to attach to my dream, 'this morning, you remember you spoke to me of people who——'

"'Ah! that was it,' returned the schoolmaster, appearing to receive, with a kind of eager attention, the explanation of my dream; 'that was it—your fancy was struck. Well, it's a strange—a very strange dream,' he added more composedly, 'and thank God! it's only a dream; for the grave is recovered, and nought remains now but the memory of that infamous desecration. Come, Martin, let us hope that the abominable wretch who was the author of it will not escape punishment. But go and lay down, my boy; for my own part, I am quite broken with lassitude.'

"And thereupon the poor schoolmaster threw himself down upon his pallet and in the poet's words:*

'He sighed, stretched out his arms, then closed his eyes, and slept.'

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LOVELY REGINA APPEARS AGAIN TO PERFORM AN ACT OF FILIAL PIETY, AND LITTLE MARTIN PLAYS AT BO-PEEP.

"For several days after the burial of Regina's mother, absurd reports had been scattered about the

* In French:

Soupire, étend les bras, ferme l'oeil et s'endort, which represents a very different character from Claude Gerard, namely, la Mollesse, or Sloth, in the Lutrin, and is considered one of the finest lines in the great poet Boileau.

village by certain old crones of certain apparitions, which had been seen, said they, in the little house which the poor young woman had occupied until her death; but, a short time after, these rumours ceased, thanks to the exertions of Claude Gerard who seemed to me greatly annoyed by that superstitious credulity, and the attention it drew upon the little house, which was sold, however, two or three months afterwards.

"From the day I had beheld Regina taking part in her mother's funeral, from that day which was likewise the first I ever spent with Claude Gerard, my reformation may be said to have begun: I felt a sad but a soothing pleasure also in lurking together in my mind this double anniversary.

"Besides I had rigidly and scrupulously performed that inward promise of keeping up with respectful piety the state of her mother's grave—a modest grave: it was inscribed with the single name of SOPHIA, the poor woman's christian name; and this last insult they had inflicted upon her memory, refusing to endow the monumental stone either with the name of her family or of her husband.

"The schoolmaster, who had been deeply affected by the sad and mournful fate of that unfortunate woman, had approved of my desire to preserve that grave from sure and rapid degradation. I surrounded it with a rustic trelliswork, which on either side came up in circular shape to the trunk of the large cypress tree, behind which I had gazed upon Regina; then, all around the monumental stone, I deposited a line of rich green grass, and sanded with fine yellow sand the narrow walk enclosing this small plot; in fine, I had provided against the flower season of the woods and meadows, a border shaped like a basket, about the skirts of the grass.

"Several times a week I used to visit this solitary and gloomy spot, and spent there a part of the *holidays* allowed by the schoolmaster.

"The winter destroyed the latest flowers I had planted in the autumn before the first anniversary of the funeral; but, towards the middle of February, the snow-drops and the wild primroses, abounding in the meadows, began to bloom, and on the 27th of February in the morning, I had changed the border of the grass-plot, then radiantly green, into a true basket of rustic flowers composed of the lilac and the white rose, gentle and melancholy colours exquisitely fresh.

"My task being over, the sanded walk nicely smoothed, I had sat down to rest myself for a moment upon a wooden form raised by my own hand at the foot of the cypress-tree.

"I then gave loose to my reveries, and reflected that there at that very spot, just a year before, I had for the first time beheld Regina, since we carried her off in the forest of Chantilly.

"Suddenly the sound of a carriage and post-horses, first at a distance, came nearer by degrees; a secret presentiment made me start, and I experienced a violent throbbing at the heart.

"Soon after the carriage stopped, and in a few seconds I saw Regina come out, dressed in deep mourning like the year before.

"The aged female attendant held her by the hand, and the grim-visaged mulatto followed at some paces behind.

"I remained a moment spell-bound to my seat, delighted, overjoyed, and yet stupefied with wonder; but when I saw the lovely child approach, I fled in as much dismay as if I had been guilty of some evil deed: I leaped at a bound over the enclosure of the little garden and rushed through the cemetery, but not so fast but I heard the exclamation of surprise and joy which the sight of those flowers she so little expected to see bending and nodding over her mother's grave drew from the heart of Regina.

"I came running in to Claude Gerard.

"'My friend,' said I to him, as I entered, (for he had desired me to call him by that name)—'my friend, if any one should come and inquire who has tended the tomb of that poor lady, I conjure you, do n't say it was I.'

"My uneasiness, my alarm, my desire to escape from the gratitude that was fairly due to my disinterested attentions produced the most lively astonishment in Claude Gerard; he easily guessed that something yet remained to be said. For a whole year, his influence over me had been increasing; and therefore, when he pressed me with his inquiries, I had not strength enough to withhold *my secret* from him; and thus I confessed my early childish love for Regina.

"But yet I concealed from the schoolmaster the theft of the pocket-book and the cross. Shame held my tongue, nor could I proffer the avowal.

"I expected to see my master angry with me; but no—he merely said to me:

"'In the course of a few years, my dear boy, I will remind you of your confidence: until then continue to look after the grave, and tend it with veneration. If they inquire, I will say it was I who fulfilled this pious duty, or rather that you did it by my orders.'

"Regina did indeed wish to know who had taken so much care of her mother's tomb: before leaving the village, the mulatto went to the presbytery to inquire about it. The curate was abroad; but in his place the mulatto found the dumpy Dame Honorine, who, with admirable presence of mind and mercantile instinctiveness, replied:

"'It was by the Curate's commands that *our grave-digger* has tended the grave so carefully. The man has been paid for doing so; so you need not give him any thing, sir. But your offering by right reverts to the *shop*, and if you think proper, we will keep it up at the same cost.'

"So the mulatto gave his offering to the *shop*, concluded a bargain for the following years, and returned the same evening with Regina, who, from that day, always imagined that the attentions paid to her mother's grave had been a mere matter of hire and pay.

"Since that day, at each annual return of the day of mourning, I was a prey to the most intense emotions. The year seemed to glide along more rapidly, thanks to the impatience, to the anxiety mixed with alternations of hope and fear, with which I awaited that one most grateful day of days, which restored my Regina to my hamlet.

"On the third anniversary, having remarked from the hollow of a hedge where I stood peeping, that Regina remained by her mother's grave until night, whatever might be the inclement state of the weather, I had contrived, by means of a mat of straw suspended to some perches, to raise a kind of roof over the little form at the foot of the cypress tree; and I had the more reason to congratulate myself on this precaution, as the snow kept falling almost the whole day through.

"And thus it was that, from year to year I saw Regina grow up and turn from a child into a young woman. These meetings, which were annual only and free from transition, rendered still more striking the expansive graces of her person and beauty, which became truly dazzling to behold.

"When she had reached the age of about sixteen, the admirable proportions of her tall slender figure, the regularity of her features, the stately and elegant effect of her carriage, and her every motion were incomparable. Her three black stains, dark as her splendid ebon hair, imparted a more glittering charm, by contrast to the fresh transparency of her complexion and the fine purple of her lips.

"Every year her countenance expressed no longer a poignant grief, but rather a grave and melancholy resignation, and a deep inward thoughtfulness. She continued at times steadfast and without moving for a whole hour, with her hand over her brow, as

if obstinately pursuing the thread of some impenetrable mystery. Often too she seemed to shudder with heartfelt impatience. One day, from the bottom of my usual hiding place, I distinguished, after one of these long fits of abstraction, a look of painful indignation which contracted her features: tears trickled down her checks, and she cried out:

"'Oh! mother! mother!—I will avenge you!'

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* * * * *

"I had been taken in by Claude Gerard, when a child; I became a man beneath his roof. Thanks to his attentions, his fatherly solicitude, I acquired in a few years a certain degree of knowledge: and in truth, the more I think of it, the more I am amazed at the potent will of Claude Gerard. In spite of difficulties without number, of obstacles and hindrances which met him at every step—the *deadly atmosphere of his school—the scanty supply of the most elementary books—the unfortunate carelessness of parents, and the ill-nature of the parish authorities*, the admirable man almost always obtained incredible results. Philosophers, schoolmasters of the day, and you ignoble charlatans who profess so much sympathy with the cause of education, look at this patient and enduring man, and then blush to think how many thousands you have squandered in deceiving mankind!

Far from confining the education of his pupils to reading and writing, he gave them as often as he could a *useful* and *practical* instruction suited to their state of life.

"Thus his teachings were clear, simple, and various—they touched upon and solved all the fundamental questions of agriculture, proper to the district he inhabited, shielding by such means an entire generation of young men against the mischievous prejudices of practice and old habit.*

"Twice a week, Claude Gerard used to take his pupils round to different working tradesmen in the parish; then, according to his taste, each of them practised and acquired the rudiments, at least, of one of those manual callings indispensable to the husbandman in his remote and lonely farm. Thus the schoolmaster's disciples became carpenters, locksmiths, and builders, and could put their hands to almost any domestic job within doors. And in order to compensate the tradesmen for these practical instructions given to his pupils, Claude Gerard gave to the artisans in return, certain notions of geometry and mechanics, applicable to their trades, and extremely useful to the carpenter, the locksmith, and the builder, to simplify and consolidate their labours.

"Claude Gerard completed the education of his scholars by giving them a concise and lucid explanation of the principal phenomena of nature, and by some elementary notions of medicine, so requisite for the health of the poorer classes.

"A few citations from the laws as regards the principal rights and duties of citizens, the succinct analysis of the most important and glorious events of our history, concluded the education of adults.

"In the course of these two latter teachings, rapid and imperfect though they were, but still lively and palpitating with patriotism, the schoolmaster taught, if taught it can be, THE LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY.

"'My children,' would he say, 'you have two mothers, whom you are bound to love and reverence, to whom your very blood and life are due,—*your mother* and *your native land*. Let your country be the first object of your worship; be proud to belong to her—to serve her—to defend or to revenge her.'

"That ardent and ingenuous belief in a being called France—a holy enthusiasm which gave birth to the immortal prodigies of the republic, might cause some of the strong minds of the present day to smile with scornful pity. But those rustic understandings, those straight, hardy, and loving spirits which had been formed by the schoolmaster's lessons, still possessed sufficient candour to ignite at the name of country; nor did they know that the patriotic spirit of our glorious fathers in 1793 could be a subject of ridicule and scoffing.

"The consequence was that at a later period, the schoolmaster's disciples felt a pride in serving their country. Whenever a recruiting party came among them, it was freely and promptly they paid the tribute of their blood, instead of escaping to woods, and leading there a life of vagrancy and riot.

"Another striking proof of the influence of the *honourable* education which Claude Gerard had contrived to impart to these youths, thanks to his marvellous intelligence, devotion, and firmness of mind.

"Here is a very remarkable fact—

"The revolution of July burst out: in many provinces—in ours among the rest—there were certain weak manifestations of riot, but soon suppressed; a part of the population of the two next parishes to ours having risen up to the cry of *Guerra aux châteaux—(war with the castles or country seats)*—came to our village to recruit among our youth, before they marched against a magnificent castle, situated not far from our village, and occupied by a gentleman of considerable fortune. I never shall forget that day, the unforeseen result of which was destined to produce so great an influence on my own fate.

"That troop of armed peasants, some with guns, others with pitchforks or scythes, preceded by a drum, and, strange to say, with the *serpent* belonging to one of the parish churches, wore a fatal and dreadful aspect. It halted on the open square in our village; the drum was beaten, and the ring-leaders summoned to arms all the *free spirits* to go and *upset* the castle of Saint-Stephen.

* This reminds us of a very pleasant anecdote, which will show that the baneful love of *routine*, or of doing what *father did before me*, is not peculiar to French farmers. In the good year 1841 the Pope sent over to London a very intelligent foreign officer to superintend the construction of some small tug-boats or steamers, to navigate the Tiber. Now almost all foreign officers are *students* in their professions: they like to fortify their own minds with the ideas of other men of the same calling. Captain C., therefore, took advantage of his stay in the English metropolis to get together a good library of English books on the subject of the Steam Engine. He used to be very much astonished in perusing these books to find so much print, and so little knowledge in them, just as we Englishmen are when we get hold of a book of Lord Brougham's. He tried very hard, poor fellow, bought a good many books, read them over attentively, but could find nothing in them but very commonplace matter, long since known to him, and grumbled a little to find how the great engineers plundered one another like wreckers on the coast, and when they had done that, plundered *themselves*. Every time I saw him he pointed out what he called *redites*, or repeats, in which the author had very slily served up the same pudding five or six times. "I gave ten shillings for this book" he would say, "but it the author had written it fairly, by saying one thing once, instead of five times, I could have bought it for two, and should have esteemed him as an honest man into the bargain." At length grown weary of his searches, he at last hit upon a capital plan to solve the mystery;—that is, *to find something new upon steam to carry back to Italy*. "There is my own engineer," said he, "with whom I am laying out 10,000 pounds for my boats, and who is worth half a million of money. He must be stuffed with steam knowledge. He 's the man."

So accordingly Captain C. calls upon the rich and renowned engineer, and says very gravely, "Sir, I am in great perplexity, and I come to you on a most important occasion."—"What is it?" says Crœsus, the knowing one, rubbing his hands, and thinking of course it was another tug he should have to build for his Holiness. "I want you, sir, to give me a list of the best and most instructive books on the science of steam, such as you must have studied yourself to have risen so high in your business." Poor engineer, how blank he looked! how his face fell, when he heard the word *Books* instead of *Tugs!* At length, when he could recover his wind, "Captain," he replied, "I know nothing of books—I never read any, nor make any, *and what I know in my trade I learned from my father before me, and am teaching my son in the same manner.—Translator's note.*

"Claude Gerard was soon informed of the event; he went out and reasoned long and boldly with the rioters, whilst the mayor and curate fled in consternation. After his conference, the schoolmaster promised to levy within the hour a reinforcement of twenty resolute men, and to lead them against the castle.

"And truly, half an hour after, twenty-five young men belonging to our parish, more or less armed, united themselves to the former band under the leadership of Claude Gerard, who demanded as a favour to constitute the van.

"During the progress from the village to the castle, those whose allies we had become, exulting in their shouts and songs, fell upon a lonely deserted house, broke open two or three casks of wine, and drunkenness soon came to aggravate their other causes of excitement.

"Our own body, far from sharing in this orgie, took advantage of the disorder and delay to march more rapidly on the castle, without being heeded by the other part of the column.

"We reached the castle of Saint Stephen. Claude Gerard pointed out to me the proprietor of that magnificent seat, in the distance. That personage, noways suspecting the danger which threatened him, was walking in the front yard with his wife, his children, and several ladies. To come up to the castle we were obliged to cross over a bridge which stood above a canal surrounding the park. Claude Gerard ordered us to guard that bridge, and happen what might, to dispute the passage with our allies, who were five or six hundred yards behind.

"After which, going directly up to the owner of the castle, who began to feel uneasy at our gathering, he said to him:

"'Sir, have no fear; a *possé* of some fifty men, misguided by hunger and evil counsels, have resolved to attack your house; they came to our village to raise men. After a quarter of an hour's conference with them, I perceived there would be no dissuading them from their plot; so I resolved to accompany them to protect you if need were. Sir, I have collected yonder brave men whom you see set to guard the bridge; I do not yet despair of appeasing those unhappy misguided men to whom we allied ourselves for the purpose of controlling them. If I fail in that matter, the young people I have led hither, together with myself, will fight in your defence. Do n't be grateful to me, sir,' said Claude Gerard to the astounded proprietor; 'I do n't know you; but by opposing ourselves to an act of violence which nothing can excuse, these young men and I are only defending the honour of the *people*, to which class we belong. So compose yourself, sir: whatever men of heart and spirit can attempt, will be attempted to cause your person and property to be respected.'

"Then Claude Gerard returned to us — again commanded us to guard the bridge—forbade any one of us to accompany him, and went forward by himself to meet the band of rioters, now half drunk, and within a few paces off. It required all the *sang froid*, the resolution, the wonderful authority of mind, with which nature had endowed the schoolmaster, to subdue and predominate over the fury of our allies, when he wanted to show them the unrighteous and scandalous action they were about to commit. One of the misguided men was so exasperated as to lift up his flail and strike Claude Gerard; but the latter, though wounded, as vigorous as he was brave, threw down his adversary, —disarmed him,—and continued to appeal to the generous sentiments of his opponents. The greater number were unmoved by his exhortations, and marched on clamorously towards the bridge; but a strong minority went over to his side.

"Then came the contest. It was short, decisive, and not very bloody. The rioters soon fled, and dispersed in disorder; and we spent the night and bivouacked under the trees of the park, regaled in a friendly manner by our grateful and hospitable host; and next morning at day-break we returned to the village.

"It was after our return from this expedition that Claude Gerard said to me—

"'*Do you know, Martin, what sort of schoolmasters have to superintend the youth of those two parishes that wanted to give loose to such excesses? Do you know to what hands the governing powers have entrusted the saintly mission of teaching the children of those two villages, and to bring them up to honesty? One of these schoolmasters is a* PUBLICAN, *who deals in* USURY *when he is not drunk: the other is a* RETURNED TRANSPORT. Alas! like masters like scholars.'

"'Impossible!' cried I; 'no language could be strong enough to brand so guilty, so criminal a scorn of the most sacred of all duties—the *education of childhood!* It cannot be true that whilst the Almighty has marked so strongly the importance of this matter, by giving the first educator of the child — the mother—an instinct so angelic, that no cultivation of man's boasted reason can equal it: that the ruling powers on earth can show so heedless a disregard to the subject as to confide the innocence of childhood to the ulcerous corruption of the hulks.'

"Claude Gerard smiled sorrowfully.

"'Martin,' resumed he, 'I tell you the truth. No doubt the authorities have not purposely chosen a drunken usurer or a liberated convict to dispense education among the people:—but the petty officials, induced by their infernal talleyrandism, know how to render the functions of a schoolmaster so wretched, so precarious, so degrading, so loathsome, that none are found to accept them except those who, like myself, devote themselves to this sacred calling through conviction, or else the ignorant, the infirm, the vulgar, or the *criminally branded*.'

"'But what can be their object,' said I to Claude Gerard; 'to degrade a calling which ought to be so highly honoured?'

"'The object, my dear boy?' continued the schoolmaster: 'it is that these powers and authorities desire to govern a people brutified by ignorance, poverty, and superstitious credulity:—it is that they dread to have an enlightened population, to whom their knowledge would impart a consciousness of their rights and their strength. And consequently they are doing all they can in order that pastoral colleges may sweep away and replace our schools. The BROTHERS prepare our children to renounce all human dignity, and to sink down to an abject servitude. You have read their writings—those of Father Gabinet among others,—and you can tell what generations of men are those which must spring up in France under the guidance of *those dark and restless monks, whose principle has never been scanned, and whose high priest abides at Rome*.'

"'But this calculation is horrible,' exclaimed I, 'and still more absurd. Yesterday we saw the excesses which men will indulge in when they have been misled by bad instructions.'

"'My lad,—power has no fear of violence, for that can be extinguished by blood: but it dreads the *circulation of mind*, which neither lead nor steel can attain. And, unhappily, it must be acknowledged, power often has for its accomplices the parents of children. And yet, if a father is civilly responsible to society for the faults committed by his son up to a certain age, why should the same father not be morally responsible for that son's ignorance—ignorance, the source of every evil as well as poverty?'

"'Why, truly!' said I to Claude Gerard, 'that would be but just.'

"'Alas! my poor boy, so many things are just, and nobody takes upon himself to prove it. In some

countries, indeed, the father who does not send his children to school is fined. The measure is good to a certain extent; for often have we to enforce severely what is right. And yet how could we apply such a measure here? So wretched are these populations that these poor people cannot dispense with their children's services, in tending the flocks by day, or in tilling the ground in spite of their age. Then, what 's to be done? Obliged to set their children to gain, by hard labour, the little bread they allow them, they cannot send them to school, and we cannot find it in our hearts to blame those miserable parents. 'Oh! poverty! poverty!' exclaimed the noble schoolmaster, with the most painful dejection. 'Poverty! art thou ever to be the source of every evil upon earth; and will it never come, the day of just distribution and of happiness to all?'

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CHAPTER XVII.

HOW THE WORTHY SCHOOLMASTER SINKS AT LAST UNDER THE PERSECUTION OF HIS BITTER ENEMY, THE PRIEST, AND RESOLVES TO LEAVE THE PARISH AND TO ESTABLISH YOUNG MARTIN IN LIFE.

"I HAVE already acknowledged that when the tomb of Regina's mother was violated by the malefactor, I had stolen a pocket-book containing a large number of letters, a little cross, and a medal.

"In order to extenuate my shameful fault in my own eyes, I had made a singular vow to myself: I had sworn never to read those letters until the day when Claude Gerard should speak to me again of my secret love for Regina.

"A short time after one of those annual days on which, as usual, I had watched the lovely mourner without being seen, Claude Gerard said to me:

"'My dear Martin, you must now be about sixteen or seventeen;—some years ago you confessed to me your premature love for Regina. Your passion, although accounted for by the influence of the sad example you had before your eyes in early childhood, was so unsuited to your age, that I was unwilling either to blame you, or even to allude to it. I thought as it was a childish feeling it might wear off; so why speak to you about it? If, on the contrary, the love was fated to last, I could not blame you. I have since studied you attentively, and am convinced of the excellent tendency this passion has had upon you, and will continue to have. Such a love, though hopeless, is, for such a heart as yours, the best safeguard against the enticements of manhood. But I am bound to impress upon you, my dear boy, that your love is hopeless: do not delude yourself with any vain fancy; Regina is beautiful—her pious respect for her mother's memory bespeaks a noble and tender soul. Her character is, no doubt, singularly firm, her spirit very energetic; for she must have surmounted many obstacles to induce her father to allow her to travel every year full six hundred miles to come here and pray over her mother's grave. I have learned that Regina's father, without being very opulent, is rich, however, and belongs to the oldest nobility. Her daughter appears to be proud of her birth, since, two years ago an enamelled plate, bearing her family arms, was brought hither by herself, and by her orders kneaded to the humble stone beneath which repose her mother's remains. This pride of descent I do not blame her for; the young girl doubtless sought by this measure to protest against the shame with which they wanted to load her mother's memory.'

"Claude Gerard, as he pronounced these last words, stopped short: he seemed affected, and kept silent for some minutes.

"Surprised at this behaviour, I looked attentively at him; he seemed to be reflecting. Then some words rose to his lips, but again some other thought restrained him; and he afterwards said to me with a grave and most feeling look:

"'Whatever may happen, and whatever chance may perhaps let you in the secret of, my dear boy, never do you forget that there is still a something superior to the most tender affection,—and that is, the respect which is due to a sacred promise.'

"'I don't understand you,' said I to him, in still deeper astonishment.

"'All I ask of you,' resumed he, 'is not to forget what I have just told you regarding Regina's mother. It is possible the future may unfold to you the meaning of those words at present so darkly mysterious. Finally, to return to Regina, my dear boy, that young woman is rich and admirably beautiful; she is proud of her high birth, and her character is as resolute as her heart is generous. Now those native qualities, and advantages of rank and fortune, are all so many insurmountable obstacles to separate you from her. Love her then as you have loved her hitherto, invisible and unknown to her. Think for ever of the distance between you; and let her be your guiding star through life. Whenever you are yielding to temptation, invoke her in your thoughts, and then you will blush for your weakness, and act uprightly. We adore, we venerate God; we are sustained by him in good, we are afraid of him in evil; and yet he never appears to our eyes, nor does he ever communicate with us. Let it be the same between Regina and you.'

* * * * * *

"On the evening of the day that I held this conversation with Claude Gerard, availing myself of the first opportunity when I was alone, I dug up the earthen pot which I had often paid a visit to, and drew out the pocket-book with a violent throbbing at the heart, and a flushing forehead, as if I was guilty of a shameful want of trust.

"But how great was my surprise—my disappointment, when I had drawn the letters out of the pocket-book.

"The letters had no other address than initials, and the whole correspondence was illegible too, being written in German. (That's why I have since learned that language.) Nevertheless I unfolded them all one by one, hoping to find at least one written in French. But vain was that hope. I found it impossible to read one of them.

"I found, however, among the papers one singular object: it was a small regal coronet, of a peculiar shape, cut with interstices out of a piece of gold paper. This coronet, fastened by two silk threads, blue and yellow, to the middle of a square piece of stout parchment, was surrounded by symbolic lines of fantastic appearance, with the letters S. and W. intertwined in cypher.

"Below the coronet you read the following date in French:

"*The 28th of December*, 1815, *Faubourg du Roule No.* 107, *at half-past eleven in the morning.*

"Then below the above date, and in German, were five lines of unequal length, and in various hands. The first, the third, and the fifth, lines were written in a firm hand, whilst the second and the fourth lines were traced more finely and with less strength of character.

This whimsical object surprised me exceedingly; in vain did I attempt to penetrate the meaning of the symbolical signs which partly covered it; the golden coronet which surmounted the date, likewise excited my most lively curiosity, but no means of satisfying it.

"I returned the parchment, the cross, the medal, and the letters into the pocket-book, mentally taxing my wits to find a means of knowing, without rous-

ing the schoolmaster's suspicions, in what language the letters written.

"Alas! an unforeseen event came to disturb my meditations on the subject.

"I was under the necessity of leaving Claude Gerard.

"I had gone to him a child—I was leaving him a man, not so much through age (I was about eighteen) as through the sense and experience I had acquired in the rude school of poverty, labour, and self-dependence.

"During those years spent in the society of a man of great learning, and endowed with the rarest qualities, a practical philosopher if ever there was one, my understanding was expanded, my mind was cultivated, my character grew strong and visible, and I learned a trade, that of a carpenter, to serve as a resource in bad times.

"These results were not sudden: frequently I had to struggle with bitter and deep dejection caused by the poor, harsh, and futureless life to which I was bound as with a chain. I had to suffer long fits of desperate sorrow when I recalled to mind my two early companions whose fate I continued in ignorance of, and a home in my recollections I loved with the same unabated fondness as I felt on the day of separation.

"I had to restrain the violent feelings of resentment I nurtured against the worthless enemies of my benefactor: for his admirable resignation had never wearied; his placidity, so dignified and stoical, had not once faltered—whilst the fierce enmity of his savage persecutors had risen to the extravagance of rage. The consequence was, that, after a sublime resistance, full of humility, self-denial, and renunciation, the noble spirit sank and bowed beneath the blow.

"Yes,—it came at last, the triumph of the most slaughterous—the most inveterate enemy of that patient martyr:—I mean the hell-born curate of the parish.

"That worthless priest, after having recourse to a series of scandalous intrigues, calumny, and infamous underhand practices, succeeded at last to breed distrust and cold disregard between the schoolmaster and the poor parishioners, who had so long worshipped him. Then this object, so obstinately pursued for years, being once obtained, it became an easy task to compel Claude Gerard to quit the village.

"The last hour I spent with the schoolmaster I never can forget.

"Towards the end of September, 1832, he and I were sitting together in the den, divided from the stable by hurdles for cattle.

"The day was dark and rainy, and a gloomy light filtered through that window by which, eight years before, I had entered the schoolmaster's retreat to rob him, in the company of Bamboche and Basquine.

"I must observe, a little to extenuate that shameful action, that, thanks to my labour as a carpenter's workman, I had been able, in the course of two years, to repay the money to Claude Gerard, and thus enable him to restore the deposit with which he had been entrusted.

"On that morning, therefore, by the pale light of a dismal winter's day, Claude Gerard was pacing his room slowly—silently—and with a stooping head.

"Seated on the same pallet on which I had passed the first night of my reception in that humble abode, I had listlessly rested one of my hands on a small travelling-bag lying by my side.

"Claude Gerard, dressed according to his custom, in a shabby blouse, and wearing wooden shoes over his naked feet, had greatly aged: numerous wrinkles already lined his face; his hair was turning grey over the temples; but the gentle and mournful expression of his features was still the same. However, at that moment his visage seemed contracted by strong feelings, which he struggled to suppress. At length, succeeding to master his emotion, he said to me in a soothing voice, at the same time pointing to the window,—

"'There is the place, my dear boy, where, eight years ago, you entered this abode. Desertion, distress, evil examples, and ignorance, had driven you to steal. You are now eighteen: you leave this roof an honest man, educated, and fully able to provide for yourself.'

"'Oh! my friend! believe me, I never can forget——'

"'Attend to me, Martin,' said the schoolmaster, interrupting me. 'I remind you of the point whence you started, and the way over which you have travelled up to this day, not to indulge in any vainglory for the good I have done you; but in order that this last retrospective look at your former life may give you strength to look the future boldly and quietly in the face. Since the day I first harboured you, I have coursed your life day by day, and having witnessed the struggles and trials you have so honourably sustained, I have learnt your character, and know how full it is of the good, the generous, and the persevering. To take up, as you did, a laborious and painful life, without any joy or pleasure, and illuminated but once a year by the shining apparition of a young girl, whom you are doomed for ever to love without hope—in fine, a life of restriction and self-denial, and endure it without bitterness, without murmuring against fate: such conduct, my boy, is very fine and grand.'

"'Alas! my only friend! in that rough and broken road, if my strength would sometimes fail me, you were there. A few words of yours restored my courage: but now my heart is bursting when I reflect that I am going to leave you for a long time, —perhaps for ever!'

"'For ever! No, no, my boy! They have succeeded in driving me out of this parish, after a ten years' struggle; but still, in my new parish, I trust I shall not again meet with the like animosity. Well,—next year, probably, the gentleman you are going to join at Paris will grant you a few days' holiday. Then, my poor boy, we shall have a great pleasure,—we who have so few of them at any time.'

"'Ah! my friend, if you had consented, I would never have left you; I should have continued to be a partaker of your toils.'

"'No, no, Martin; that career would not be a proper one for you. An excellent situation has been offered to you—not to accept it would be madness. You never can have a better a more liberal protector than M. Saint Stephen. He thinks he has contracted a great debt of gratitude, because I rescued his castle from pillage two years ago.'

"'And his life too, perhaps, and at the peril of your own, Claude,' said I.

"'Be it so; but I have always refused to accept his offers of kindness; and now he has at last found a means, he believes, to prove his gratitude to me. He is playing an important part just now at Paris. In seeking for an upright and steady man to act as his confidential servant, he wrote to me, and offered to make me his private secretary, agreeing beforehand to approve of my own terms. I declined.'

"'You declined the offer for yourself, my friend, but accepted it for me.'

"'Because I have foreseen it would be an honourable post for you, and place you upon a good footing. I have answered for you soul for soul. M. de Saint Stephen has so much confidence in me, that in spite of your youth, he has consented to receive you as his secretary. True you are to go first on trial, but that probation does not alarm me. Once more, my boy, you perceive this situation is

far above hope, and you must embrace the opportunity with ardour.'

"'And it is in order to secure to me a condition so peaceful and happy, that you have resigned yourself to continue in your present laboursome career?'

"'However humble, however wretched it may be, my boy, it is henceforth a sacred calling to me.—I say it without any pride, and you have seen it: in spite of so many obstacles to overcome, I have often obtained the most satisfactory results. I ask for no other reward. To take up a generation of poor, ignorant children, half barbarised by want and misery, and to convert them to a race of men intelligent, upright, instructed, and laborious, is a noble and grand achievement; and that enables me to contemplate with scornful pity all the indignities with which I am oppressed. Now that I have finished the good task in this parish, what care I for their jealous hatred?'

"Then he added sorrowfully:

"'Would that I had no other afflictions than those which spring from my enemies.'

"'I understand you, my friend — you allude to the poor maniac, whom you visit once a week.'

"The schoolmaster paused awhile; he was pensive and restless; at length with a violent effort to subdue his contending emotions, he said:

"'I have a confession to make to you; I hesitated long; but however painful it may be, I must not be silent—since we are going to part.'

"'A confession to me, my friend!' said I to him with amazement.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SCHOOLMASTER REVEALS A SECRET TO YOUNG MARTIN, AND GIVES HIM HIS PARTING ADMONITIONS ON GOING TO PARIS.

"'YES,' said Claude Gerard to me, 'this confession will sting me as I make it, because it will prove to you that I have distrusted you and myself too.'

"'And in what?'

"'You remember you were absent from here for a fortnight, about a year ago, after your illness?'

"'Yes, my friend—you wanted me to go and spend the time of my convalescence a few miles in the country, to benefit by the change of air.'

"'Well! during your absence,' said Claude Gerard to me, with embarrassment, 'some one came hither to inquire for you.'

"'For me—who was it?'

"'One of the friends of your childhood.'

"'Bamboche?' exclaimed I, with a shiver of joy that I cannot describe. 'Then my fears were not well founded: he lives, and has not forgotten me.'

"Then, feeling my eyes overflowing, I added:

"'Forgive me, my friend; but if you only knew all I feel——'

"'I conceive it, my boy, and am far from blaming your tender feeling. This is what took place during your absence last year:

"'I was here one morning, when I saw a young man present himself, tall, robust, and with a bold resolute countenance, and dressed, as I thought, with more display than elegance. 'Sir,' said he to me, 'it is now seven years since you kindly received a poor deserted boy, as I have just been informed in answer to my inquiries in the village.'—'What interest do you take in that child, sir?' said I to the man, whom I scrutinized with equal surprise and curiosity.—'That child is my brother,' answered he.—'Your brother!' returned I; 'you are not Martin's brother, but his early companion: your name is Bamboche.' In spite of his bold and fearless look the man was disconcerted, and replied with a frown: 'It don't matter to you what my name is, sir:—I want to see Martin. It is only after the greatest trouble that I have at last found him out, and I tell you that I will see him,' added he threateningly. I shrugged up my shoulders, and answered him coldly:—'I tell you, sir, that you shall not see him: since a fortnight Martin has left this village.'—'And where then is he now, sir?' cried Bamboche in a passion. 'I must know it.' 'You can't know it, sir,' said I.'

"'My lad, I never can give you any idea,' added the schoolmaster, 'of Bamboche's obstinate persistance to learn where you were; he employed every means, from loud threats to humble, nay, touching supplication; but all was vain: I continued inflexible. Then, hoping to stagger me by frank speaking, he confessed the theft you had formerly committed, and offered me a purse of gold to indemnify me; but I spurned the purse and told him you had contrived to restore the sum by working thrice a week as a carpenter's man. Bamboche made a last attempt: he told me that since two months, finding himself in a situation of great comfort, he had thought but of one thing, and had but one single aim—and that was to discover your retreat; and that after making incredible exertions to recollect the road you had formerly gone over together, he had succeeded at length, and that now it was I who strove to hide you from his friendship. There was evidently in the language of that singular man a mixture of cunning and sincerity, of effrontery and deep tenderness, which really struck me, and, in spite of myself, affected me; and that very impression strengthened the resolution I had taken not to let you and Bamboche meet. I know something of men; I was then, and I still am, certain that your former companion had not come honestly by the luxuries he wanted you to partake with him. Besides he acknowledged as much to me with a callous disregard; for he said to me:—'I certainly have not acquired my property by *competing for the Montyon prize*, but on the word of Bamboche, the most rigid justice has no right to search my pockets.' I continued unmoved. For three successive days, hoping to overcome my scruples, Bamboche returned every morning and renewed his importunity. At last, seeing the fruitlessness of his efforts, he made up his mind to return. His last words, which I expected would have been angry and bitter, were on the contrary kind and respectful:—'Though you may think me a bandit,' said he,—'I am no fool; although I am young, I have seen something of life. I can tell who I am speaking to, and I am certain you are a trump such as we do n't turn up every day. And therefore,'—added he playfully,—'you are quartered in a stable.'

"'Still unchanged,' said I to Claude Gerard.

"'Yes, I have found in him still the same old character as you described him; but with a certain knowledge of the world, a fluency of speech, and a jocose carelessness which I was far from expecting in him. 'After all,' resumed he, 'you must have turned out Martin a good and worthy lad; the stuff was in him: all you had to do was to cut as deeply as you liked into that frank and honest nature; for Martin only bit into evil with the edge of his teeth, and never buried his jaws in it like me.'

"'Poor Bamboche!' said I to Claude Gerard.

"'Like yourself,' answered he, 'those words of Bamboche's touched me to the heart. 'But how is it,' said I, 'that you who believe in good, and are thus able to admire it, are not likewise able to practise it?'

"'What reply did he make to you, my friend?'

"'You see how it is, my worthy sir,' continued Bamboche, 'I believe in a fine marble statue, with a stately attitude, a mild and serene aspect, such as Martin's must be at present; I admire that fine statue as I behold it through the rain and the wind, through the tempest and storm, standing immoveable on its pedestal. Yes, all that appears to me very grand, and I love to witness it. But still as

I am unluckily made of flesh and not marble; I don't try to turn statue, and I say to myself: Go, old fellow, and weather the storm and the whirlwind—*stone does not feel, but flesh does.*'

"'In spite of the coarse conclusion, the first image was a great one,' exclaimed I; 'how Bamboche's mind is enlarged!'

"'Yes,' said Claude Gerard, 'this image is a great one; but it is a fallacious one also. The strong man, though made of flesh, may convert himself into marble to resist the whirlwind of evil passions. Nevertheless, I could not avoid being struck as you are, with that singular language, alternately trivial, cynical, and lofty. Like you, I wondered at what school it could have been that the lost and abandoned boy had acquired those refined ideas which now and then sparkled in his speech.'

"'But Bamboche, after a moment's pause, resumed in a tremulous voice—'Come, farewell, sir; perhaps it is better for Martin that I have not seen him. Embrace him for me, and with all heart. Ah! you are very fortunate, you are,' added he, lifting his hand to his eyes. 'Tell him I love him as much as I did eight years ago; and that I do n't understand it. For, thunder of heaven! I was not very soft then, and I am grown devilish tough since. But never mind; for him I am not changed—tell him so; and that, whenever he likes, I am his, *head and heart*, purse and hand, in life and in death—as I was at La Levrasse's. And if ever he comes to Paris, here 's my address. Fear nothing on his account; I may be of service even to an honest man.'

"'And where was the address,' said I, with tearful eyes.

"'That address,' said Claude Gerard, stepping towards his little black table and taking a sealed envelope out of the drawer, 'I have put within this cover, my dear boy. When once you reach Paris you shall be at liberty to take note of it.'

"I seized the envelope most eagerly, and looked silently upon it with a kind of awe.

"Claude Gerard went on to say:

"I hesitated for a long time before I made up my mind to this communication; and this distrust in you is the fault I accuse myself of. I ought to have been sufficiently sure of the strength of the principles I have planted in your mind not to have withheld the information. However, I continued for a long time to dread the influence which so early an attachment might exercise over you; I feared it might be too strong for you to resist, and that the example of Bamboche, should you keep his society once more, might overrule some of the lessons I have given you. The human heart is so weak and fallible. One error often serves in our own

spirit as an apology for another. And then you were for ever speaking to me of your early friends with regret; it is true they had not, like you, met with a safe and rigid guide; but still that constancy of thought manifested the lasting vitality of your affection for Basquine and Bamboche.'

"'But Basquine,' exclaimed I,—'did he say nothing to you about her, poor girl?'

"'Not a word.'

"'Poor thing! she must have surely been the victim of the fearful crime which the state of the place indicated.'

"Let us hope otherwise, my dear lad,' said Claude Gerard; then he resumed:

"'Such were the reflections which induced me to conceal my interview with Bamboche; the future will show if I am right in swerving from my resolution. One word more to conclude the subject. If—the thing however was impossible—I had sent you to Paris without resources, without protection, without a patron to interest himself for you, or without a fixed and safe dependance, God is my witness I should not in such a case have mentioned this visit to you—nor given you any hint to enable you perhaps to meet him in Paris; but now you are going to that city with the certainty of filling on your arrival a respectable situation under a gentleman of high standing and credit. So I have nothing to fear; and I see no reason to repent the confidence I am now placing in you.'

"No—no, surely not, my friend; you shall never have any reason to repent your trust,' said I to the schoolmaster.

"And taking the envelope which contained Bamboche's address, I began to tear it up; but I can't tell what invincible power it was that held my hand, and made me stop before I had half finished the laceration.'

"Claude had not taken his eyes off me, and had observed that I had only partly torn the envelope containing Bamboche's address; he smiled benignantly, and said:

"'Poor boy, I understand your feelings.'

"Then growing warmer, he added:

"'Come, let us not give way: let us rather trust more to each other. Why, after all, should you relinquish the hope of seeing the old companion of your misfortunes? Is it because he has continued to wander in the wrong path? Who can tell us but that the salutary influence of your friendship may prevail with him? Is it because our friend is ill that we are to desert him, and leave him a prey to the sickness by which he is consumed? No—no, my boy, all things considered, I no longer dread this meeting on your account. You can be no loser by it, and your friend may gain much.'

"I soon began to participate in Claude Gerard's generous opinion: my fears disappeared—all my confidence returned.

"'Now,' resumed he, after a pretty long pause, and with much feeling, 'now my boy, one last word relative to my personal interests. Your protector, in accepting your services instead of mine, has written to say that he does not yet consider himself discharged of his obligations towards me. This time I accept his offers, and, in this letter of introduction which I now give you, and which you will deliver to him the moment you arrive, I request a favour at his hands—a very great favour.'

"'For you, my friend?' replied I.

"'Yes; and I conjure you to remind him of this request, lest in the midst of his heap of business he should forget it.'

"'What favour is it, then?'

"'The parish to which I am going is situated close to a large, busy town, where there probably will be a lunatic asylum. In that case——'

"'I understand you—the poor maniac, you mean.'

"'Yes, I should deem it a most precious favour if she were transferred to it; for then I could see her almost as frequently as I used to see her here; and my visits and attentions are become more necessary than ever.'

"'More necessary than ever? How?—explain yourself, Claude?'

"The schoolmaster did not reply; his features expressed a painful anguish; he blushed, and the flush across his forehead seemed to betray some secret shame.

"'I did not like to trust you with this new affliction,' said he, 'because I cannot think of that event without a mixed feeling of grief and consternation; there are things so horrible that we feel a deadly shame in the simple relation of them. But by informing you of this fatal secret, you will understand still better the importance of the request I have urged in favour of that unhappy woman. Alas! I had thought that human misery and degradation could not extend beyond the loss of reason. I was deceived,' added Claude Gerard, with a foreboding smile. 'Yes,' he continued, 'that which has happened to her proves I was mistaken.'

"'What do you mean?'

"'Listen, and you will see that all the horrid things you witnessed in your childhood among those wretched mountebanks were as nothing to this monstrous enormity. This event, by strange fatality, occurred the day after Bamboche's last visit here. But,' added Claude Gerard, interrupting his tale, 'in order to let you understand the whole horrors of that dark mysterious deed, some particulars will be requisite. The asylum has a large garden adjacent to it, which on one side is bounded by a line of buildings, and on the other by the yard of the best tavern in the town. The poor woman I speak of, in spite of her grievous sorrows which bereft her of her reason, is still remarkably handsome——'

"And here Claude Gerard buried his face in his hands.

"I was unwilling to interrupt his painful silence; but he soon after continued with a shudder:

"'I said she was still handsome. Her lunacy, though raving at first, had become so harmless, that she was indulged with unusual freedom. They allowed her to walk in a reserved part of the garden, which, as I said before, ran along the yard of an inn. One evening, I tell you again, it was the following day of Bamboche's last visit here,—one evening, then, that unfortunate woman, who felt a kind of relief when they suffered her to walk by moonlight, happened to be in the garden belonging to the asylum.'

"Here again the schoolmaster paused, and then went on:

"'Now, from some cause hitherto veiled and shrouded in mystery——'

"Claude Gerard could not finish his narrative. A little boy, quite out of breath, ran into his chamber and cried out:

"'Mister schoolmaster! there 's the coach passing at the end of the village; it can't wait above five minutes; for it is behind time, and the driver is afraid he shall be too late at the relay to join the stage.'

"'I prefer that,' said Claude Gerard, abruptly, as if a heavy load had been taken off him; 'I don't think I should have had the strength to conclude. My heart was torn and overturned at once. I will write to you.'

"Then the excellent man opened his arms to me.

"This separation gave me the rudest shock, and caused me the greatest sorrow I ever felt in my life. And a cruel train of chances rendered this distress truly appalling.

"The *patache* which drove me to the relay where I was to meet the Paris *diligence* or stage-coach, drove entirely along that side on which Claud Gerard's small window looked out.

"Thus, when leaving the village, I had to go over

exactly the same ground as that I had crossed to go to meet Bamboche after the robbery at Claude Gerard's.

"From the form I was sitting upon, I saw my preceptor at a distance standing at his little window, and waving his hand for the last time.

"I could hardly stifle my sobs. The carriage turned the corner, and I saw him no more.

"Then, as a last trial, the *patache* reached the hillock leading to the stone cross at whose base I had picked up Basquine's little shawl in a pool of blood.

"An hour after, we overtook the *diligence;* and I took my place in it for Paris.

"The patron I owed to the fatherly goodness of Claude Gerard, had paid for my journey, and made all the requisite advances to enable me to reach the metropolis in decent attire.

"The idea of going to live in Paris, the ambition of so many worthy provincials, did not dazzle me in the least. Far from it; when I thought of Claude Gerard and the loss of all friendly intercourse which I had to endure, it was with the deepest sadness and most bitter regret that I went along towards the great capital.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW YOUNG MARTIN CAME TO PARIS AND FOUND THAT A FIT OF APOPLEXY WHICH KILLS ONE MAN MAY SOMETIMES DO ALMOST A MORTAL INJURY TO ANOTHER.

"As soon as I arrived in Paris, and had got out of the *diligence*, I took a hackney-coach, put my small bundle therein, and told the driver to set me down at M. de Saint Stephen's, my future patron, 90, Rue du Montblanc. The address was written on the letter of introduction given to me by the schoolmaster. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, as the coach stopped in front of a fine-looking mansion.

"To my great astonishment, I saw under the roof of the gateway two or three groups of people talking with great excitement, whilst several servants were passing to and fro through the court with a bewildered look.

"Looking about for the porter's lodge, I went by the groups, and heard the following exclamations and reflections hurriedly exchanged:

"'What a great misfortune!'

"'And so unexpected!'

"'Who would have thought it yesterday?'

"'And his poor wife and children who went out, they say, at twelve o'clock, and who know nothing about it.'

"'When they come in—what a shock it will be!'

"'It 's dreadful to think of.'

"Although to me inexplicable, these interrupted and broken speeches made me feel uneasy; I walked on to the porter's lodge—it was empty. After some time hesitating, I spoke to a livery servant who was crossing the yard, and said to him:

"'Is M. de Saint Stephen at home?'

"The man stopped, looked at me as if my question had both surprised and angered him; then he answered abruptly, as he passed on shrugging his shoulders:

"'Perhaps you do n't know that master has just had a fit of apoplexy, and that the body was brought home an hour ago.'

"And then the servant left me stultified with wonder.

"The sad intelligence was perfectly clear; but I could not—I would not believe in it; therefore, with that child-like obstinacy which people in despair often manifest by continuing to hope to the last, I approached one of the by-standers, and said to him:

"'I trust it is not true, sir, that M. de Saint Stephen has had a fit of apoplexy, as the rumour is?'

"'How, the rumour, sir? Unfortunately nothing can be truer. I was here an hour ago when his body was brought home in his carriage. It 's a great misfortune for his family.'

"'Very great, indeed,' cried I; 'but is there no hope, then?'

"'None, sir—none whatever. The event happened this morning, about ten o'clock, at the Home Office, where M. de Saint Stephen chanced to be. They, of course, sent for the first physicians in Paris; and——'

"Here the speaker broke off. A certain excitement became suddenly visible in the yard, at the sight of a man servant out of breath, who, running in from the street, exclaimed to one of his comrades, the man I had just spoken to, and who seemed to be placed there as a scout:

"'Here 's missis—I saw the carriage.'

"On hearing this, the other domestic rushed up the flight of steps leading to the mansion, and a moment after an elderly man with white hair came out of the ground-floor wiping his eyes, which were full of tears, and went to the gate-way, stood on the sill whilst he waved to them to stop the carriage that was coming forward, and then went hastily into the street.

"'That old gentleman,' said one of the people, 'is a relation; and won't suffer that poor lady and her children to return here and receive too sudden a shock from this unexpected accident.'

"'They will probably convey them to some relatives,' said another.

"However insignificant these particulars may appear, I have not forgotten them, because, in my case, each of these words was a stab, as it served to destroy the last insane hopes I had retained.

"It was all up.

"In a few minutes, I had seen my prospects destroyed; I was in Paris without the least support—almost without resources;—for out of the sum so benevolenly forwarded by my protector to Claude Gerard, to defray my expenses on the way and clothe me, I had only ten francs remaining.

"My first thought was to go back immediately to Claude Gerard; but the fare would cost one hundred and twenty francs, and to return on foot would take fifteen or twenty days.

"Stupid, uncertain, inert, and utterly dismayed, I stood I do n't know how long under that gateway, till every one else had by degrees withdrawn.

"The porter of the house, noticing me at last, came up to me and said:

"'Sir, what are you doing there?'

"I started and looked at him with haggard eyes. He had to repeat his question a second time before I could answer him. At length, partly recovering, and taking Claude Gerard's letter out of my pocket:

"'Alas! sir,' said I, 'I have come six hundred miles to deliver this letter to M. de Saint Stephen, who was to have been my protector, and when I arrive I am told he is dead. I know nobody in Paris, and am almost without money.'

"My dejection, the sincerity of my voice, the letter I showed him, went doubtless to the porter's heart. He answered me:

"'Poor young man! this is most distressing, indeed; I pity you, but I can do nothing in the matter. You must wait a few days. If you are so strongly recommended to master, no doubt his lady will do something for you; but as for the present, it is impossible to speak to her, just after she has sustained such a loss. You must be patient and wait awhile.'

"'Be patient, sir,' exclaimed I, bitterly; 'I have

already told you that I know nobody in Paris. I have no means to support myself.'

"'I can't help it, poor young man. Return here in a fortnight; perhaps then you may be able to see the lady,' answered the porter, accompanying me by degrees to the door, which he closed behind me.

"Completely ignorant of the manners and customs of Paris, and forgetful of every thing but my interview with M. de Saint Stephen, I had left at the door the hackney-coach I had come in, and my little bundle inside of it.

"'So then we are engaged by the hour, master?' said the coachman to me, when the door was shut upon me. 'Fortunately I looked at my watch at the coach-office; it was twenty-five minutes after two when we set out. *Where are we going, master?*'

"I did not understand the meaning of the coachman's words—*engaged by the hour*—and was far from knowing how threatening they were to my poor purse. Besides, I was borne to the ground by this question, which was a true summary of my awful embarrassment:

"'Where are we going?

"'Where could I go?'

"All at once I remembered Bamboche.

"'What a providential chance!' thought I; 'and how prudent it was of Claude Gerard to tell me to preserve his address.'

"Thereupon, opening the envelope containing it, I found a satin card, on which I read the following words engraved in Lilliputian letters: — Captain Hector Bambochio, 19, Rue de Richelieu.

"Although this military grade and foreign termination in the name of my early companion greatly surprised me, and gave me much to think of, I was in too critical a situation, and I candidly confess I felt too vivid a desire to see Bamboche again to pause before such scruples; and I said to the coachman, with a sigh of joy, as I re-entered the coach:

"'Take me to the Rue de Richelieu, 19; is it far?'

"'Close at hand, master.'

"And then the vehicle was driven off towards the Rue de Richelieu. All was forgotten: the terrifying uncertainty of the future, as well as the fears I might have entertained of Bamboche's bad example. I was about to see him again after eight years' absence; he who still tenderly loved me;—his visit to Claude Gerard was a proof of it. Perhaps, too, by means of Bamboche, I should hear tidings of Basquine. For the first time since a long interim, I felt a sensation of delight; and it was the more soothing to me, on account of the recent suspense and despair which I had been subjected.

"The hackney-coach stopped near the entrance to that noisy and glittering thoroughfare, for we were at that time at the end of December, and though it was still day, the shops began to sparkle with lights. I was dazzled by so much splendour, and stunned with so much noise; and under the impression of the happy meeting I expected with Bamboche I began to think Paris looked really like a fairy land.

"The driver opened the door; I entered a sumptuous-looking house, and asked the porter if Captain Hector Bambochio was at home?

"'Captain Hector Bambochio!' cried the porter, in a respectful tone of deference and regret, 'alas! sir, it is six months since we lost him.'

"'Is he dead, then?' cried I.

"'Dead! no—no, sir—God forbid that such a calamity should happen,' answered the porter. 'Captain Hector, one of the liberators of Texas! so generous a nobleman, so pleasant and good-natured, and so lively. No—no, there are too few men of that stamp to part with them. I merely intended to say that, about six months ago, we lost the captain for a lodger.'

"Bamboche a liberator of Texas! That too surprised me at first; but in my ingenuous credulity, it did not appear impossible to me that my friend, for some few years at least, might have emigrated to the New World, where he had, no doubt, acquired the rank of captain. Bamboche's bravery and high spirit made the supposition plausible. Glad to hear my friend spoken of with so much respect and attachment, my desire to see him became still stronger and I said to the porter:

"'Where does Captain Bambochio live now?'

"'In the Rue Seine Saint-Germain, Hotel du Midi. The Captain gave up the superb apartment he had hired and furnished in this house, because the neighbourhood was too noisy for his father, the marquis.'

"This was a stunner, indeed!

"'His father—the marquis?' repeated I, mechanically, for Bamboche the son of a marquis astonished me far more than Bamboche transformed into a captain—or Bamboche a liberator of Texas; I therefore re-echoed the words without seeking to disguise my amazement.

"'His father the marquis?'

"'Yes, sir,' resumed the talkative gate-keeper. 'Do n't you know, then, that the noble Marquis Annibal Bambochio, the father of Captain Hector, has arrived in Paris to be present at the celebration of his marriage?'

"'The Captain's marriage?'

"'Certainly, a superb match too it is!' said the porter, with a confidential look;—'the daughter of a Spanish grandee. It's more than a duke, as the captain told me.'

"'The daughter of a Spanish grandee?' I repeated with increasing stupefaction.

"'Neither more nor less, sir: the captain told me when he went away: My brave comrade—(the captain called every one his comrade, even his own servants: so that we were always ready to go through fire to serve him)'—added the porter, by way of parenthesis; then he continued: 'My brave comrade,'—said the captain,—'as soon as I am fully installed in my father-in-law's palace, in the capital of all Spain, I will have you appointed *suisse*, or gentleman porter, and you shall carry a halbert.' Now the captain may perhaps have forgotten me by this time,' added the porter, with a sigh; 'and since you know him, sir, it would be very kind of you to remind him of his promise.'

"'Certainly; I do know the captain, and I will recommend you to him,' answered I, not reflecting on what I was promising.

"I was smitten with a kind of moral vertigo: Bamboche wedding the daughter of a Spanish grandee! In spite of my unlimited credulity, that did at first appear to me impossible. But soon blinded by friendship, 'Why should it not be so?' said I, to myself. 'Bamboche is young, handsome, bold, and enterprising; according to his conversation with Claude Gerard his mind must have become expanded and cultivated. What is the wonder if he has indeed turned the head of a young girl? He is a captain, and the cloth levels all conditions.

"I felt so happy to hear Bamboche spoken of with commendation that, in spite of my desire to see him directly, I could not help saying to the porter:

"'So, then, the captain was much liked?'

"'Liked, sir! gold dropped from his hands. Never was seen such a man! For instance: he had bought a fine set of furniture, he kept it only six months, when he left this to go and reside with his father the marquis. Well! he sold his furniture back to the upholsterer for one fourth of its value, without once bargaining with him; retaining only a portion of it, the furniture in the dining-parlour, and what for, think you?—to give it to the servants *to drink his health!* and it was worth two thousand francs. To me he gave a bass violin and a splendid bow inlaid with gold, and a tame bear

he kept in his garden. They fetched me together about four hundred francs. How can you help liking such a man?'

"'So the captain had a kind heart?' said I, after listening to these proofs of Bamboche's liberality.

"'That he had, indeed, sir: he always paid freely without any bother; but he was as quick as gunpowder; he did n't mind giving you a kick or a cuff. But how could we complain of it, when these little sallies were sure to be followed with a handful of money?'

"I knew Bamboche too well to wonder at these revelations. I hoped, before leaving the house, to learn some tidings of Basquine, and I said to the porter, with some embarrassment:

"'Was there not a young lady of very fair complexion and dark eyes who came to see the captain?'

"'A young lady? say a dozen, rather; for he was a famous rover among the wenches; and his Spanish lady-love had better keep a sharp look out after him.'

"'The young lady I mean,' said I, 'was called Basquine.'

"'Basquine? I do n't know the name,' said the porter. 'But she may have come with the rest of them, for many went up to the captain without naming themselves.'

"I can't tell how it was that my heart, which had begun to expand, now collapsed again. I said to the porter:

"'Sir, will you be so obliging as to write the captain's address for me?'

"'Most willingly, sir. What is there I would not do for any friend of Captain Hector Bambochio?'

"The next moment the man handed me a paper containing these words—'*Captain Hector Bambochio, Rue Seine Saint-Germain, Hotel du Midi.*'

"I delivered the address to the coachman as I returned to the coach.

"The porter raised up the steps respectfully, and said to me:

"'Sir, you will not forget to recall me to the captain's memory, for the office he promised me in Spain?'

"'I won't fail to do so,' returned I. Then the coach rolled away again.

"Night had now quite set in.

"After some time, the carriage stopped in a dark, dismal street nearly empty, the appearance of which offered a singular contrast to the lively and brilliant street I had left so shortly before.

"The coach was opened; I alighted at the door of a dark narrow passage.

"'Can this be the *Hotel du Midi?*' I inquired of the coachman, thinking the dwelling very humble for the noble Marquis Annibal Bambochio, who was to be the father-in-law of the daughter of a Spanish grandee.

"'This is the place, master. Look at the lantern,' replied the driver, pointing to a kind of oblong cage lighted within, on which was painted in red letters: '*Hotel du Midi.*'

"I entered and groped along the passage, and stopped before the light issuing from a chamber closed by a glazed door.

"A woman, shabbily attired, was slumbering on a chair in the chimney-corner; behind her I perceived a board dotted with nails, from each of which depended a key with its number above it.

"'Madam,' said I to the woman, opening the upper frame of the door, 'is Captain Bambochio at home?'

"What?' answered the woman starting out of her sleep, rubbing her eyes, and looking at me with ill-humour, 'what do you say?'

"'I ask you, madam, whether Captain Bambochio is at home.'

"'*The captain!*' cried the woman in a tone of irony and wrath, 'the captain!' then her features began to swell, her voice grew shriller, and she resumed with a redundant volubility which I attempted not to interrupt:

"The captain has sneaked off from here, thank God, and I hope I shall never see his ugly face again; unlucky captain he was to me, a noisy, brutish, quarrelsome, drunken fellow. Six of my lodgers went away rather than continue in the same house with that vagabond. He wounded two students in a duel, on account of a little wench who came to live with him, and he broke two of my nephew's teeth, for complaining that he had to open the door for him at all hours. The landlord was obliged to fetch the watch to turn the ruffian out, and yet he had the impudence to hire the finest apartment on the first floor! Oh, the Italian scoundrel,—I shan't forget him in a hurry.'

"Such was the contrast. There was as great a difference in the impression Bamboche appeared to me to have left behind him in this house as there was between the look of this hovel and the mansion I had just left. The illusion of the Spanish grandee, and the rich marriage fled and vanished like a dream, and I blushed for not having appreciated at their real value the impudent inventions of my early comrade.

"Not desiring to continue the conversation, I said to the woman:

"'Can you tell me, madam, where the captain resides at present?'

"'I am not your servant,' replied the woman coarsely: 'look for the ruffian wherever you like!'

"This answer terrified me;—my only, my last hope was to discover Bamboche. Whatever position he might be in I was steadfast enough not to dread his evil influence over me, and had sufficient faith in his friendship, and, to be plain, in his inventive understanding, to hope he would help me to emerge, with honour, from the deplorable embarrassment of my situation.

"I was going, therefore, to press the sulky crone to tell me Bamboche's address, when, suddenly changing her mind, she cried out—

"'After all, I do n't mind telling you where he lives, so that, if you see him, you will be able to tell him that he is remembered here—that we often talk about him. You will inform him at the same time that, if he shall ever return here, he will be taken by the watch or the police; for he must not expect to frighten them with his long arms, or bullying looks and gestures. Well! when he went away he had the effrontery to say that if any invitations from Court should come for him, or any bags of money, or cases of jewels, they were to be forwarded to *the barrier of the Chopinette, in the Blind Alley Renard, No.* 1.'

"'Thank you, madam,' said I, moving rapidly off, for fear of forgetting any part of the complicated address which I repeated to the coachman.

"'The devil!' cried he; 'are we going to Moscow? But never mind—we are riding *by the hour.* I know the barrier of the Chopinette very well; but the Blind Alley Renard—where can that be? Never heard of it, long as I have been on the stones. But 'tis all one,—I can inquire.'

"Then on we drove again.

"My anxiety still kept increasing; I began to fear I should not make out Bamboche, and if, after thus running about from house to house, my pursuit should be vain, what was I to do? what would become of me in Paris?

CHAPTER XX.

YOUNG MARTIN GOES TO THE BLIND ALLEY, AND MEETS WITH A REBUFF.—DREADFUL SUSPENSE.

AFTER a long drive through empty deserted streets, we came into one far more lively; the carriage stopped before a wine-shop, and I heard the coachman ask of several men who were talking together at the tavern-door:

"'Blind Alley Renard? my worthies, where abouts is it?'

"'When you get beyond the barrier, you must take the first street on your left, and then to the right, and after that to the right again; after that you will come to a small bit of ground and there you 'll find it,' said one of the men.

"'Thank you,' said the driver.

"'I say, old boy,' added a second, 'you know that no carriages are allowed to enter the alley. You will stop at a turnstile, for those who roost there don 't keep their carriages.'

"'Besides,' joined in a third, 'you will have deserved the cross of honour, my hearty, if you proceed so far; you will be the first coachman who ever came abreast of Blind Alley Renard.'

"'Good, good, my jovial spirits!' answered the coachman; and at the same time I heard a curse in his mouth as he whipped his panting horses.

"After passing under the barrier, and crossing through several alleys utterly dark and lonely, the coach which every moment threatened to upset in the deep ruts, rode through a field, and after a few minutes came to a stop.

"The coachman then came to let me out, and said without seeking to hide his vexation:

"'Damnation! what roads! you can certainly boast of having acquaintances in all sorts of places from the hotels in the Chausseé d'Antin down to the Blind Alley Renard. Besides it 's past eight o'clock: I have not dined—no more have my horses. Are you going to make any stay here? My horses might eat their oats.'

"'I shall know directly whether the person I am looking for is at home,' said I to the coachman; 'if he is, I shall return for my bundle. But at all events I sha'n't be long.

"Then springing out of the vehicle, I entered a narrow, miry, stinking alley, lined with dusky, blackish hovels, a few only of which were lighted.

"I knocked at the first door.

"After a long pause, heavy steps were heard behind the door, and a voice exclaimed: 'Who 's there?"

"'Is this number one?'

"'Over the way, stupid!' grunted the voice.

"I crossed over, and knocked at the door of a house rather less ruinous in appearance. Though I had struck twice they did not open to me, but I could hear a rustling sound of steps within the house, and at length the following words broke upon my ear:

"'Make haste—make haste, then.'

"At length a window was opened, and a husky voice inquired—

"'Who 's there?'

"'Is this number one?'

"'Yes.'

"'Is Captain Hector Bambochio at home?'

"'What do you say?'

"'Captain Hector Bambochio.'

"'There's no such person here,' returned the voice; and the window was closed again with a slam.

"'That 's what I feared,' said I to myself in despair. 'I have lost all trace of Bamboche. What am I to do?'

"I was going away, but still I lingered there another moment; and it was lucky I did: the window opened again, and the same hoarse voice said:

"'Here, man, are you still there?'

"'Yes—what is it?'

"'Hector Bambochio.'

"'We might know a certain Bamboche.'

"'That's the person I am looking for, but he calls himself now Captain Hector Bambochio; I don't know why.'

"'Oh! you don't know his reason for using this name?' replied the other distrustfully.

"Then whisperings were heard behind the shutters inside the window, and after a short pause the voice added:

"'Have you the *pass-word?*'

"'Pass-word! what is that?'

"'Nothing—a fine story—good night,' answered the voice with a titter.

"And the cursed window was again closed.

"Unwilling to renounce the only, the last hope that remained, I struck the window again, exclaiming:

"'Sir, I conjure you, listen to me,—I am the friend of his infancy. We have not met for eight long years. I have only this very day come to Paris, for the first time. I will prove to you that I know Bamboche. On his breast these words are tatooed: *Eternal friendship to Martin.* And I am that Martin.'

"This urgent entreaty took effect; for after a short consultation among the inmates, the voice said to me:

"'Go to the barrier of the Chopinette, and inquire for the *Three Butts.* Bamboche frequents that house, and is there every night between eleven and twelve.'

"'But does not Bamboche live here?'

"'Good night.'

"Thereupon the window and the shutters too were shut in my face, and all my prayers and entreaties were unavailing; I could hear nothing farther of Bamboche.

"I returned to the coachman and asked him if he knew the *Three Butts* tavern.

"'The *Three Butts* tavern? I rather think I do,' answered the coachman gaily; 'I often take my stand there on Sundays and Mondays. Well, this is something like, master: you may keep me standing as long as you like at such a place as that, I and my cattle, and we sha'n't complain. We shall be there in ten minutes.'

"We then started off for the *Three Butts.*

"For the first time since the morning, I reflected that the amount of the coach-hire must be considerable, in the state of my small means. But entirely unacquainted as I was with Paris, this expense had been forced upon me by the nature of inquiries. Seeing that the term of these inquiries was nearly come, I resolved to reckon with the driver; but soon after, a foolish, an absurd thought got the better of me—and I had not the fortitude to dismiss the coachman until I should have met with Bamboche: I was without a single acquaintance in that immense city, and it seemed to me *that the coachman, who since the morning had driven me about, was not quite a stranger to me.*

"Certainly such an idea appears to me now sadly dull: but when I remember the terrible sensation I felt as I thought: '*If I don't meet with Bamboche to-night, I shall be alone in this immense city,—alone, without money, without means, without friends,*' I can understand how it was I came to consider that poor driver almost as an acquaintance.

"So when the carriage drove up to the entrance of the *Three Butts,* I said to the man:

"'Wait for me here—I shall stay some time.'

"'But your bundle, master?'

"'Leave it in the coach.'

"'And let somebody *prig* it, I suppose? No—no: not so green; I 'll put it into one of my boxes, where the keenest file won't find it.'

"While the honest man was busy looking after my bundle, I went into the tavern, then almost empty; there were still, however, some tipplers remaining. By their dress, their manners, and their language, I could easily see that they belonged to the working class: they seemed to be honest mechanics, who were making merry thanks, to some lucky windfall. There was not one amongst them of those repulsive, abject examples, whom, in the course of my wanderings with Bamboche and Basquine, we had frequently met with in the vulgar taverns, frequented by the idle and disorderly, when we went in to sing and beg.

"My uneasiness began to give way; I did not think it a bad sign for my early comrade that he used a tavern selected by such honest mechanics.

"Sitting down to a table in a remote corner, in front of the door, so as to catch sight of Bamboche the moment he came, I called for a small pittance of meat, some bread, and water. I looked at the time-piece: it was nine o'clock. I had still at the worst but two or three hours to wait.

"I began my frugal meal, rivetting my eye to the door every time it opened, convinced that I should recognise Bamboche, in spite of so long a separation,—for his strongly marked features were too deeply engraven on my memory ever to be erased from it.

"By-and-bye I saw a young man come in, about five and twenty at most, and of a slender form. His face struck me at once by the regularity, the rare and masculine beauty of the features, albeit somewhat jaded: he was pale; his countenance seemed to be all the whiter owing to his long black eyebrows and whiskers, and the black top-coat or *paletot* which he wore buttoned up to his neck so as to cover both neckcloth and shirt. His boots and pantaloons were stained with mud, and he had a shabby old cap on his head.

"In spite of, or rather on account of, his wretched garments, so strangely contrasting with the handsome and noble aspect of the man, it was impossible to behold him without being struck. He walked a few steps into the room, and came nearer to me: I then perceived that he staggered a little in his gait, and that his eye had sometimes that dull and heavy fixedness which denotes a state of inebriety.

"Either by accident or by choice, after hesitating for a few moments, the man advanced towards my table, where several other tables stood unoccupied, and took a seat on my right.

"After sitting heavily down, as if his legs were stiff, he remained for a while immoveable; then he took off his cap and meant to set it on the long bench on which we were both sitting, but the cap fell at my feet.

"Moved by a natural impulse of civility, increased by the favourable impression he had made upon me, I stooped to pick up the cap, and laid it on the bench; my new neighbour noticed the action, and in a gentle, courteous voice, he said to me with a bow:

"'A thousand pardons for the trouble you have taken, sir, and as many thanks for your obligingness.'

"Never in my life had I had the least notion of what is called *good company*; but on hearing these few words of my neighbour's I felt instinctively that a man of the most fashionable life would not have spoken otherwise, and could not have marked his speech with more exquisite politeness, whether by his tone of voice, or the action that accompanied it.

"Then, singular to behold, whilst he was speaking the countenance of that man threw off its mask of gloomy fixedness and became charmingly graceful and affable:—and then again it relapsed into its heavy gloom.

"The waiter walked up to this new customer, and said to him unceremoniously—

"'What do you want, good man?'

"'A bottle of brandy,' answered the guest, with a listless drawl; and as he spoke his voice was hoarse, and not at all similar to the tone he had used when speaking to me.

"'You mean a small glass, I suppose?' said the waiter.

"'I want a bottle, I tell you; and I am able to pay for it,' replied my neighbour, still immoveable: and putting his fingers into his waistcoat pocket, he drew out several pieces of gold, and let one of them drop from his hand upon the cerecloth which covered the table.

"The waiter, surprised at the sight of the gold, looked at the man; and then, taking up the piece, examined it with astonishment and a slight shade of distrust, occasioned, it seemed to me, by the shabby and vulgar exterior of the customer.

"'Go to the bar and ring it,' said my neighbour, without moving a muscle, and apparently not in the least offended by the insulting suspicion of the waiter.

"The latter, but little inclined to be scrupulous, went up to the bar, gave the gold piece to the landlord, who rung it several times, and then the man returned and said—

"'It's a good one.'

"'Then give me a bottle of brandy,' rejoined my neighbour, in his hoarse drawling tone.

"'Shall I bring you a sealed bottle, sir?' inquired the waiter, in a more civil manner: 'the very best liquor we have.'

"'On the contrary: let it be a bottle of common brandy, such as you serve up to the rag-pickers* when they come; and take your money out.'

* The *chiffonniers*, or rag-pickers, are a class of labourers peculiar to Paris and the other great towns of France. They belong to the lowest scale of the population, and their lives are arduous, irksome, and precarious. Wretchedly clad in old, unassorted, and ragged garments, generally bent by age to that posture which is fitted to their hard calling, they issue at midnight from their hovels, with a large hamper fastened behind them, and a stick with a prong at the end, carried in the right hand. The rag-picker, thus armed for his employment, goes slowly and silently along the streets, and forms a sad and startling contrast with the brilliant reveller he meets coming from the theatre, or going to a ball-room. As he roams along he scans with cat-like eyes the road and gutter he travels over, groping ever and anon for some piece of substance to gather up and consign to his basket. Nothing comes amiss to this mute and passive industrial: bits of paper, cloth, linen; pieces of wood, charcoal, or broken pottery; fragments of vegetables, butcher's meat, bones, buttons, or books,—all are thrown indiscriminately into his hamper, and carried home to be sorted. The rag-picker is not confined to any district, and will travel for miles in the course of his pursuits, before the first peep of day summons him to return home. When he reaches his quarters, which are generally on the sixth floor in some remote suburb, his wife and he empty the basket and sort its contents, which are thus scattered *in sundry heaps of rubbish,—dirty, filthy, and putrid, within the four walls of their wretched habitation.* The staple of the rag picker's business is necessarily the *rags* he gathers, cleans, and sells to the rag-merchant. But independent of his principal commodity, this singular example of human patience often collects in the street the provisions which feed his family, and the fuel which serves to cook them. Let no man wonder at this,—for the French do not collect their rubbish as we do to consign to the dust-hole: they throw it into the street, and the consequence is, all those little accidents which grow out of *inattention, carelessness, waste*, and *improvidence*, are effectual causes to favour the calling of the rag picker. Only imagine, for instance, what the consequence would be, supposing that all the dust holes in the metropolis were laid open to a class of similar labourers in London, and that a body of rag-pickers were allowed to *visit and search every day the dust hole of the shopkeeper, the merchant, and the nobleman, and carry away whatever they might consider a fit subject for profit or use!* The annual value of the London dustholes would certainly go far to support the poorer classes, and might, perhaps, be equal to TWO MILLIONS STERLING! The Parisian rag-picker finds all he possesses in the street,—even his wife, who is, almost invariably, a *ci-devant* woman of the town, whom he had become acquainted with during his nightly rambles, and who always proves an industrious, constant, and faithful helpmate to him. Thus, the poor girl who left her comfortable home

"'He must be an Englishman,' said the waiter to himself in an under tone as he left the room.

"More and more surprised, I kept watching the man's actions, but without losing sight of the tavern door through which I hoped to see Bamboche come in.

"The waiter returned, set the bottle and a small glass upon the table, together with the change remaining out of the piece of gold.

"'Give me a tumbler,' said my neighbour, and pushing forward a twenty-sous piece, signed to the waiter to take it as a fee.

"'He's a lord,' said the waiter to himself, hurrying to fetch a tumbler, and returning with it.

"My neighbour put the money into his pocket without counting it, poured himself out half a tumbler full of brandy, and swallowed it at a draught.

"Then, leaning the back of his head against the wall behind the bench we were sitting on, he remained fixed in that posture, looking vacantly forward, and beating a tune upon the table with his fingers' ends.

"I stealthily kept watching him. His features, hitherto stiff and dull, brightened up several times. He smiled repeatedly with great gentleness and archness: next he shrugged his shoulders—hummed between his teeth,—and once again his features became set and rigid as before.

"The recollection of my first master, Limousin, the bricklayer, was brought back to my thoughts: I do n't know how it was, but I fancied I descried some vague analogy between the extravagant hallucinations which used to haunt the poor man every Sunday when he was in liquor, and the sottish ecstacy and inward visions which likewise assailed this man,—poorly clad, it is true, but who, to judge by several signs, could not be what he tried to appear. These far-off and remote recollections of my childhood, abstracted me for a moment, for they included Bamboche within their range. A slight noise roused me from these reflections: I turned towards my neighbour;—he had just spilled half his glass. After drinking the rest—urged, no doubt, by one of those puerile whims which intoxication begets, he dipped the end of his forefinger into one of the puddles of brandy on the cercloth, and began to draw here and there a number of fantastic figures. I observed the stranger's motions the more attentively, that I had just had my suspicions confirmed by a new discovery:—the man's hand, which was perfectly white, with long shiny nails, was remarkably handsome: he wore several gold rings on his little finger, and in one of them a red stone was encased, and a coat of arms was engraven upon it.

"I watched with a listless curiosity the whimsical feats of my neighbour's fore-finger, which had suddenly left off making fantastic figures and begun to form huge capitals in their stead: first there was an R, then an E; the combination of those two letters R E made me feel a something which I cannot define—it was a sense so strange, so confused, so uneasy, and unusual—that it seemed like a presentiment.

"I could not take my eyes off the drunken man's finger as he continued his work; I hastened, I urged on, I propelled, so to speak, with all the strength and power of my soul, the conclusion of the third letter which he had begun to trace, and that (my recollections do not deceive me) without explaining to myself in the least the cause of my impatience. Finally, the figure of the letter was terminated beneath my neighbour's finger. How I trembled: it was a G.

"Suddenly these three letters—the three first of the name of REGINA—appeared to my troubled senses as if they had been drawn in characters of fire.

"And yet I could not dissemble to myself that many other words began thus as well as Regina. It was foolish—I felt it was, to anticipate and create causes of anguish by spontaneous misgivings; but still, in the midst of all these reflections to repulse my own fears, there was lurking a fatality stronger than all which told me that the man sitting by my side, and intoxicated with brandy, was going with his stark heavy finger to write the remainder of that sacred, all-hallowed name, which I hardly ventured to mingle in my prayers, on a public-house table.

"I forgot every thing—Bamboche, my present hopeless, desperate situation, my future prospects, my benefactor,—to watch with consuming anguish the movements of that stranger's finger. He went on and began to delineate another letter: but in his dull, besotted state he could not prosecute his labour, easy as it was, without remission. Every now and then he paused; his head swung and oscillated to and fro like the pendulum of a clock, and occasionally it leaned forward, whilst his inflated and puffy eyelids would partly close. At length the letter was finished—it was an I. Then followed an N; and soon after the whole name of Regina lay completed on the table. How my poor heart beat! How my forehead glowed with shame, confusion, and indignation!

"But it would be in vain for me to attempt to describe all I felt; not for a moment did I conceive the idea that the name of Regina might very well belong to other persons, and I said to myself: 'Regina is in Paris; this handsome, this fine young man, who certainly must be wealthy and of noble birth, is enamoured of that young lady, since his memory is so retentive of her image that even the brutifying effects of drunkenness cannot exclude it, and even then he cannot forbear to write that dearly cherished name.

"The name lay on the table, and the stranger, when he had written it, considered it complacently for a moment or two in stupid satisfaction, whilst the rockings of his heavy head became more sudden and frequent; then there came from his gaping mouth a species of guttural laugh: he uttered, or strove to utter, a few unintelligible words, crossed his arms upon the table, and let fall his blank unwieldy head upon his hands, and slept, or rather became benumbed by the apathetic somnolency of drunkenness.

"A little above the spot where the unconscious head was sustained, the name of Regina still appeared before me; I rose as gently as possible, and went and wiped out, with pious reverence, even to the last faintest traces of that name thus profanely scandalised.

"I was returning to my seat, when the tavern-door was again thrown open. I uttered an involuntary cry of terror.

"For I had seen, emerging through the dark shadow of the outward passage, the awful visage of the Rump-in-the-Bowl. Since eight years that had elapsed between our meeting in the cemetery and this apparition at the tavern, his features seemed to be still more tawny and embrowned than formerly; and although he still looked robust and determined, his hair was turned almost white;—but his raiment did not bespeak distress. He stood on the sill of the open door as if he felt afraid to come into the tavern, for he appeared to be anxious and under the influence of alarm. At length, pushing his head through the open doorway, he said, in a hoarse husky voice,—the same, I thought, as I had heard answering me through the window of the blind alley,—he said to the victualler—

"'Has Bamboche been here to-night?'

at sixteen with some heartless profligate, who for some short season rode in her carriage,—who for ten years has passed through every gradation of misery,—who has been deserted, neglected, distrusted, and despised,—is once more discovered and brought just within the pale of that society which had so long spurned her, by the sagacious benevolence of the poorest servant in the state.—*Translator's note.*

" 'No, replied the innkeeper, drily and snappishly, as if to rid himself at once from an importunate guest, whose room was more agreeable than his company.

" ' If he comes this evening,' added the Rump-in-the-Bowl, in a hurried tone of voice, ' tell him not to go down yonder this night,—*it 's too hot:*—he will understand. You 'll not fail to tell him—will you ? '

" ' Good—good ! ' replied the innkeeper, shutting the door in the face of the ungainly visitor, and grumbling between his teeth as he returned to the bar—

" ' The devil speed such vagabonds ! '

CHAPTER XXI.

HOW YOUNG MARTIN SPENDS HIS FIRST NIGHT IN THE GAY CITY OF PARIS.—HIS ADVENTURES AT A MISCELLANEOUS LODGING-HOUSE, AND THE STRANGE ADVICE THAT IS GIVEN TO HIM IN THE MORNING.

" I COULD not mistake:—the Rump-in-the-Bowl had renewed his acquaintance with my old comrade Bamboche: he was the person alluded to when the bandit, entering the tavern with looks of alarm, had exclaimed—' If he comes here this evening, tell him not to go down yonder—*it is too hot: he will understand.*'

" Without being able to dive into the meaning of those mysterious words, I readily surmised that some danger probably common to both him and the Rump-in-the-Bowl, impended over Bamboche.

" Not only did the thought of such a community of life with that robber make me shudder for Bamboche, but it threw me into a mortal state of perplexity: I no longer dared, as was my intention, to question the host on the subject of my early friend, in order to learn whether I was certain to see him that night. The reception given to the Rump-in-the-Bowl was not encouraging; but still, when I saw it was getting late, reflecting on the critical situation in which I was placed, I subdued my reluctance,—went up to the bar to pay my score; and then, for the first time, I perceived that the company had all dropped off one by one, and that none now remained save my sleeping neighbour and myself: I took courage, therefore, and said to the landlord—

"'How much do I owe you, sir?'

"'Threepence for meat—one penny for bread,—that's fourpence.'

"I laid down a piece of money on the counter, and continued—

"'I was informed, sir, that the said Bamboche came here every night?'

"At the name of Bamboche the landlord knit his brow with a dissatisfied look, and answered—

"'My tavern is a public resort;—I must perforce admit all kinds of persons.'

"'Do you think Bamboche will be here to-night, sir?' I asked.

"'I don't know: but if he does,' returned the innkeeper, looking at the clock, 'he may stop outside: it's just upon twelve, I shall shut up my house.'

"'And to-morrow, sir, do you believe he will be here?'

"'How can I tell? All I know is this,—that I heartily wish he may come to my house as seldom as possible; it only serves to bring suspicion upon it, when such fellows darken my door.'

"Then, handing me my change, the host continued—

"'Twelve o'clock: good night to all.'

"Then, looking about him, he saw my table companion still asleep, and said to himself—

"'Ah! there still remains the gentleman with the piece of gold who called for the bottle.'

"Thereupon, the landlord went up respectfully to the slumberer; but not daring to shake him, he called out several times—

"'Sir! sir! sir, I say!'

"The stranger did not stir.

"I had no longer any hope of seeing Bamboche that night.

"The fatal moment was come at last: I must reckon with the coachman. After discharging his claim, what should I have left? Where was I to sleep?

"I went out of the tavern.

"It was a dark, cold, wet night. One of the lanterns of the coach had burnt out,—the other was just expiring. The driver was asleep on the coach-box;—not a soul to be seen in the street.

"A cowardly, dishonest idea came into my head,—to sneak off without paying the man, and leave him as a security the small bundle of linen and clothes in his keeping; but I did not yield to that base temptation. Desirous to escape from my suspense at any price, I woke up the coachman,—and not without trouble.

"'Hem! what's the matter? Ah! ready master?' said he, shaking himself, and shivering in his huge great coat. 'The cold is so fierce it gets quite through you. I had fallen asleep. Where are we going, master?'

"'I shall stay here,' said I: 'give me my bundle, and tell me what I owe you.'

"My anxiety on saying this was great indeed.

"The coachman took out his watch,—went up to the lantern, and said—

"'You engaged me at half-past two, master; it's now past twelve; that makes nine hours and a half,—say ten, including the wetting: that makes fifteen francs, ten sous,—say sixteen francs. If you are satisfied, master, I will get out your bundle.'

"Whilst the driver was looking for my bundle, I searched my pockets, and counted what little money I had left. It amounted to nine francs and a few coppers.

"Then, like a stupid, faint-hearted boy, I wept with dismay.

"'Sir,' replied I, giving him all the money I had left, 'I have never been in Paris before: I felt secure of a good place on my arrival, but my patron died this morning: I still had a friend left; I have been looking for him all day in vain. I expected to meet him here this evening,—this last hope is destroyed. When I hired your coach I did not know the charge: I have not enough to pay you the whole amount; all I have left is nine francs and a few sous. I have given them to you:—search me if you like—I have not got another farthing.'

"'That's not my business,' cried the coachman in a fury; 'when a person has not the means to pay for a coach, he should go on foot.'

"'Very true, sir; but I was not acquainted with Paris. I hoped to go straight to my patron; but——'

"'All this is nothing to me; I want my money, exclaimed the coachman: 'I can't let you off that way.'

"'Well—keep my bundle, too, sir; it's all I have in the world, except the clothes I have on.'

"My tears, which at first I had with some trouble restrained, burst forth again, so strongly was I affected with grief and shame.

"'What! there you are crying again,' said the coachman, less harshly. 'So then, this is true,—no gammon?'

"'It is but too true, sir.'

"'But what are you going to do?—where do you intend to pass the night?'

"'I don't know,' said I, with a heavy heart. And, strange to say, I remembered that, many years before, I had returned the same answer to La Levrasse when I had run away from my master, honest Limousin, the bricklayer.

"The coachman appeared to feel for me; he replied—

"'Come, my poor lad; cheer up, and don't cry. Come, I can't forfeit a day's work—that I can't; I must reckon with my own master. But I won't leave you without a sous on the street stones, and in such a night as this. Here, take back this twenty-sous piece, and keep your bundle. You will find a lodging-house near the Barriere:* you will know it by the red lantern: they let out beds at twopence a-night. Here's my number (and he handed me a small card). If at any future day you are able to pay back what you owe me, you will oblige me by doing so, for I have a wife and children.'

"'Oh! thank you, sir! thank you!' cried I with heartfelt gratitude.

"Just then, the tavern-keeper threw open the door. He was leading and supporting the man by whose side I had been sitting during the evening. The man was by that time absolutely senseless with drink.

"'Stop,—this is lucky,' said the landlord, on seeing the coach. 'Do you want a fare, my worthy?' said he to the coachman.

"'Yes,' replied he.

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* *Barriere* properly means a city gate, like Temple Bar. There are several of them in Paris, which cannot be left or entered without going through a *barriere.—Translator's note.*

"'Then here 's a customer for you, and a first-rater,' cried the host, showing the man he held under the arm, and to whom he bawled out—

"'Sir,—here 's a coach to take you home.'

"The lump of human matter did not answer in words, but merely nodded.

"'Help him up,' said the landlord.

"And together, the coachman on one side, the host on the other, they hoisted him up into the coach.

"When he had been thus tumbled into the coach,—'Where do you live, master?' said the driver.

"It was some time before the inert mass could be sufficiently roused. At length he replied—

"'At the entrance—of the Champs Elysees—you will find a yellow coach,—then let me down—close to it.' This speech was slowly drawled out; but nevertheless it contained that clear statement of facts which the most besotted drunkard still retains a faculty to give, in the midst of his thick vaporous state of mind.

"'There 's something for your fare,' added he, letting fall, partly in the coachman's hand, and partly in the street, the whole change he had received of his gold napoleon.

"After picking up the silver, the driver cried out in high spirits—

"'Seventeen francs! What a piece of luck! There 's none but your wine bibbers to do such things. A capital customer, this!'

"Then feeling, I suppose, some scruple at accepting so large and considerable a wetting, he said to his generous customer—

"'You have given me seventeen francs, sir; did you know you had? Seventeen francs!'

"And then the honest fellow, rattling the money in his open hand, as if he liked the sound, showed, or rather attempted to show, his fare that such was the case.

"'Yes,—keep—the seventeen francs.—it 's a long way off;—but—do n't go too fast—I like to sleep in a coach. Remember the direction,—a yellow coach at the entrance of the Champs Elysees: there is a man on the box with the coachman; stop, and let me get down close beside that coach:—do n't mistake.'

"Some good Parisian dandy, or *élégant*, may sneer at this picture of the gentleman in high life,—so drunk, stupid, and familiar. But we are fond of analogous cases, which go to prove our own instances, and we know of two recent ones.

"Who does not remember, some months ago, how every newspaper reported the account of the lady, surnamed the *belle Anglaise* (handsome English woman), who, rich and nobly born, used to frequent the most filthy, low, and wretched night taverns near the markets, and get drunk with brandy, until she would fall down and lie in the kennels?

"Who can have forgotten yet, a certain member of the British aristocracy, lately discovered dead drunk in the lobby at Astley's Theatre, the descendant of the renowned Duke of M——, who was locked up in a common station-house, and afterwards reclaimed by his son?

"But to return.

"'All right, master,' said the coachman, climbing jauntily up to his box, whilst the master of the tavern closed his door, and fastened it inside with heavy iron bars.

"The coachman whipped his cattle, and said to me as he drove away—

"'Courage, my lad; you see that, after all, Paris is the city for good fellows.'

"And the carriage was soon hurried away from my sight.

"For a moment I stood there, full of bitter thoughts; railing with disgust and hatred against all mankind, as I pondered over that rich man,—so rich as to lavish his money heedlessly in shameful and brutish enjoyments, and to squander a sum which would have supported me for full twenty days, and would have furnished me with the means of returning to Claude Gerard, and escaping from that immense city, in the midst of which I was in a manner lost. 'And will it always be so?' said I, with despair. To these so much superfluous riches, that tedium and satiety throw them headlong into the most hideous depravity,—to these so much misery and privation, that, in the pangs of their despair, they have no choice remaining but between infamy and self-destruction.

"But soon after recovering myself, and reflecting on the vanity of such recriminations against the inflexible decrees of fate, and likewise calling to mind the lessons of the noble schoolmaster:—'This is the time to put them in practice,' said I; '*resignation, patient endurance, toil*, and *self-respect*: let these words uphold me; and let the good resolutions they dictate be still further strengthened by the image of Regina whose sainted name has so recently been recalled to me by so singular an incident.'

"Pure and radiant star, towards which I must ever look up from the depths of the most miry bogs of this life.

* * * * *

"I could not continue any longer at the door of that *cabaret*.

"The street was deserted;—a soft, melting snow, falling in thick flakes, was piercing through my clothes, and freezing my blood. The coachman had told me that I should find, close to the Barriere, a lodging-house where they let beds at four sous a night. I went down the street by the flickering light of the lamps, which, forcing their rays through the mist, threw a pale reflection on the black muddy road.

"I had been walking about ten minutes, when I met with a *cheffonnier* (rag-picker), who, with his hamper strung behind his back, with a lantern in one hand, and his forky stick in the other, was raking the heaps of rubbish laid against the street-posts. Fearful of losing my way, I asked him if he knew of any house in that neighbourhood where they let beds by the night.

"'Take the second street on your left—then the first to the right:—you will see a red lantern,' replied the man, without looking at me, and without suspending his task.

"In the course of another ten minutes, I found myself in a narrow street, in front of a mean, dirty house. A flight of wooden steps led up to the street-door, which was raised above the level of the street. The door stood open;—I went in a few steps, and was suddenly stopped by the loud barking of a huge dog. Immediately after, a short squatty man, of very large build, and with a sinister face, holding a strong club under his arm, and

shading a candle with his hand, stood before me, and asked me very abruptly what I wanted.

"'Your passport?

"'Here it is, sir.'

"'The price is four sous;—down on the nail,' said the man, after a careless glance at my passport.

"I gave him the required four sous. The man led the way; crossed through a small, dirty yard, full of slosh, and threw open a door leading into a cellar, lighted only by a small, smoky lamp. I was almost suffocated by the pestiferous stench which rose up out of that horrid hole, in which I saw eight or ten beds, occupied partly by men and partly by women; and in each of the beds lay two persons. Only one of them was empty. The owner of the lodgings pointed to the vacant receptacle, saying—

"'In my house, as you have sheets, you are not allowed to lie down in your boots, because it tears the linen and grates the legs of your bed-fellow.'

"'Very good, sir,' said I.

"'Moreover, *I am not answerable for any thing*,' said the man, going out; and leaving me, unfortunately, quite unconscious of his meaning in respect to his last words.

"The bed consisted of a straw mattress, stretched upon three boards, raised half a foot above the ground by small trestles:—a tattered woollen blanket, and sheets blackened with mire and dirt, were laid over that palliasse.

"The walls, which were not papered, were moistened with the damp. The ground was merely levelled down, and formed a flat floor of common earth.

"I cast a look around on the other inhabitants of the enclosure; and felt a heaviness at the heart, akin to fear, on perceiving that the greater number had their eyes wide open. But those people did not move, and stared fixedly upon me without saying a word. That silence and those glaring looks disturbed me exceedingly. Most of that promiscuous herd appeared to me to wear very sinister, gloomy, and suspicious faces. There also lay three women, of whom two were rather young; but their faces were hollow, sunken, and withered, and nothing could be more repulsive than the expression of their countenances.

"My heart rose up with disgust and loathing; but I was then broken with the fatigue I had endured that weary day. I got into the bed, with my small bundle, in which was enclosed the precious pocket-book, stolen by me out of the grave of Regina's mother. I stretched my coat over the bed to keep me warmer, for I was so cold that I shivered in every limb.

"For a long time I lay striving in vain to sleep, and to forget for a few hours the sad situation I was in; but all I could procure was a sort of feverish, restless, and fitful slumber. At length my weariness prevailed, and I fell into a deep and heavy sleep.

* * * * *

"When I awoke it was broad day; I sat up in the bed and looked about me: I was alone; the rest of the inmates had no doubt long since deserted their pallets. As I concluded my survey, my eyes fell upon my own bed, and I looked for my clothes: they had vanished: in their place I found a pair of shabby pantaloons and a blue linen blouse; at first I did not suspect that I had been robbed, and looked very simply and ingenuously on the ground—on the right and on the left of my pallet,—but nothing could I find: my shoes, even my hat, had been carried off.

"Irritated and desperate with rage, for I looked forward to the sale of those clothes, which were quite new, as a last resource, I called out aloud for the master of the lodgings; I struck the wall against which my bed was placed: I struck it repeatedly with all my might—nobody came.

"After waiting for a quarter of an hour, there was no help for it; I was obliged to dress myself in the beggarly attire which had been left me, and go out with bare feet, carrying my bundle which had fortunately served me as a pillow; I found the landlord in a room on the right side of the yard; he was quietly smoking his pipe and regaling himself with a measure of wine. I complained to him with great indignation for the robbery which had been practised upon me.

"'That 's no business of mine,' said the man, surlily: 'I told you last night that I do n't answer for what I keep; you should have given me your clothes, and then I would have returned them safely to you. This morning I saw a man go out dressed as you were last night: I thought of course it was you,—so much the worse: you should have slept with one eye open.'

"And as I continued to complain in a still louder voice, the man said to me with brutal coarseness:

"'How now! must I turn you out? I am strong enough to do it, I hope,' added he, showing his bulky chest and herculean arms.

"'And I too,' said I, exasperated with passion: 'I am strong enough to withstand you; I won't leave this house until you have found my clothes, or give me others as good; the watch will come—let them—I do n't care—we will explain the case—I am in the right.'

"'That 's the ticket is it?' answered the host; 'well, instead of all this bother, let us go to the commissary and hear what he shall say. A pretty matter, truly, Mister Wiseacre. What! for four sorry sous that I get, must I be answerable for fifty or sixty francs' worth of clothes? Come, let 's be off to the commissary.'

"The bold assurance of the man, his mode of arguing the case, which I confess appeared very fair to me, especially when I called to mind his caution of the previous night, '*I do n't answer for any thing*:' and this further reflection, that even, supposing the landlord were condemned to compensate me for the theft, the indemnification would be granted only after a trial, and how many days or weeks might elapse before the case was decided! in fine, reflecting that, by means of his frequent intercourse with men as unfortunate as I was, the man might be of service to me, I resolved to withdraw my plea.

"I therefore tacked about, and said with bitter composure:

"'Be it so, sir; I have been robbed in your house—you are not responsible for any thing; I do n't think so. But, however, I consent to wave the point and to save you a public exposure, by withdrawing my complaint; but I shall do so only on one condition. I can read, write, and keep accounts; I know the French language well, a little geography, and history; moreover, I have a trade—I am a good working carpenter. What must I

do to get employment in Paris and lead an honest life?'

"'The devil! to lead an honest life say you, and in winter too? There's no such work to be had at this season; and as for reading and writing, there are thousands can do all that as well as yourself, and yet they are starving.'

"'What am I to do then, sir? take pity on me; I know nobody in this city; I arrived but yesterday. I am young, robust, accustomed to fatigue and labour; I don't want for spirits;—all I desire is to earn my living.'

"'Parbleu! I understand you: there are plenty of young fellows who desire it, and can't get it. However, you can go to the river side, and may perhaps pick up a few pence by helping the lightermen to unload the vessels; but take care of yourself: you must handle your knuckles there and fight your way through: the old stagers won't let you bite into their loaf without a knock or two.'

"'Is there nothing else?'

"'You can stand at the doors of the play-houses and open the coaches as they draw up: but still you will have to tussle for it; for all these callings are beset with pickpockets, prison-birds, and such-like ruffians, and the ground is rather slippery for a young man who wishes to walk straight and upright.'

"'I don't think so; a man may be honest in any condition. Thank you, sir, for your advice. Show me the way to the harbour—I'll begin there.'

"In spite of his rude and rough outside, the man seemed to be moved by my situation; he wished to serve me in his way, and after a short pause he added:

"'Stay—you appear to be an honest lad; let us see what can be made of it: tell me what you have left *of the ready?*'

"'Sixteen sous, and this bundle containing three shirts, two handkerchiefs, and a working-jacket.'

"'Is that all?"

"'All.'

"'Well, if your shirts and handkerchiefs are good for any thing, I will barter them for a good pair of shoes and a nice Greek cap; your trousers will do; you can put on your jacket under your blouse, which will keep you warmer: so there you are ready clad. Now, as to your going to earn a living either on the river or at the play-house doors, why, however smart you may be, in less than a fortnight you would do like the rest of your pals and turn pickpocket; and without offence be it said, that's the fair side of the picture. For suppose you can get no work for the first three days, what then? No, that's not the right thing. Now I'll tell you what it is.'

"'What, sir?'

"'Go into the town, stop before the first fine shop that you come to, pick up a good large oyster-shell, and break an enormous pane of glass.'

"'Oh! sir,' said I.

"'Wait a bit; what I tell you is not a joke. Or perhaps you would rather deal the first policeman you meet a stout kick in the belly—that, too, would answer the purpose; and besides, it shows pluck, and this is the good that will come of it: if you do the trick, they will grab you up, carry you off to the station-house, and then send you for three months to prison, where you will be fed, lodged, and kept warm. Thus you slip through the winter; and when the spring returns, business will flourish once more, and you may get work. Besides, the soft season will have come on; and at any rate you will have lived like a game-cock for three or four months. That's something I hope! My lad, I have spoken to you like a father. You think I am joking, but when you have been a week or so in Paris, you will tell me another story, and you will curse your stars that you did not believe me.'

"'There may be some truth in what you say, sir, although it's a sad account you have given me; however, I will attempt to get work, for I should not like to go to prison. I accept your offer as to the clothes, for I cannot go bare-headed and bare-footed. And now, can you let me have pen, ink, and paper to write a letter?'

"'There's my table and desk, and a sheet of paper which I will make you a present of. In the meanwhile I will look at your bundle, and if the things suit me, you shall soon see the shoes and cap.'

"I wrote, and briefly explained my pitiful situation to Claude Gerard, urging him to answer me by return of post, at the office—*poste restante*. I had just sealed my letter when the host came in again with a pair of tolerably good shoes and a Greek cap of a faded red colour. I then dressed myself, and secured my pocket-book in my pocket, along with the sixteen sous that constituted all my capital to begin my fortune with.

"As I was retiring, the worthy host exclaimed once more:

"'Believe me, my lad, kick the first policeman, or break the first grand pane of glass you come to, and get yourself into snug winter quarters.'

"I parted with that singular mentor with a heart as heavy as lead, and trusting to a last vain hope, resolved once more to return to the blind alley to look for Bamboche.

"Hardly had I reached the field which divided that dirty lane from the Faubourg, when I observed a large posse of people, and farther off, peering above the crowd, the bristling bayonets of a party of soldiers. I drew near and asked what it meant.

"'It's a nest of smugglers they have detected at No 1, but the police came too late to pounce upon them; they have found some goods and other suspicious articles; but the smugglers had cut last night, in consequence of some alarm, and they are pretty far off by this time.'

"I now understand what had brought the Rump-in-the-Bowl the night before to the *Three Butts*, and his looks of anxiety: he had certainly been there to caution Bamboche not to return to the house in the Blind Alley.

"Implicated in so grave a matter, Bamboche must have left Paris, or be lying close. All hope of now meeting him must be given up.

"So I resigned myself to my fate, and resolved to grapple bravely with my situation.

"Such was the first day and the first night, that I ever spent in Paris.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SCHOOLMASTER AND ONE OF HIS PUPILS HOLD A DISCUSSION ON THE SUBJECT OF EDUCATION, IN WHICH THE THREE GREAT RULING APPETITES OF LUST, HUNGER, AND DRESS, ARE PARTIALLY TREATED OF.

"It is my firm opinion, on setting down this masterly composition after an attentive reading of six months, that another well meditated work is still wanting on the appetite of LUST, and that such a book would confer a real benefit on society. The writing of this book must be done conscientiously, as the great Châteaubriand would say, for it would require many years to do any thing like full justice to the subject; it must be written with benevolence and not austerity, and above all, with no mercenary view. Properly written, it would of necessity take rank among the few books of the first class which are read by all men in all ages; *as it would explain the nature of man wherein it is weakest*, it would take the ground from under much prejudice and much calumny,—it would make us all more diffident of our own strength, and less elated by others' weakness. Legislators and rulers would feel themselves to be like children in the hands of him who would encounter and subdue this great argument."—(*Foot-note appended to a copy of "Parent-Duchatelet."*)

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The benevolent schoolmaster sat by his little table on the night of Martin's departure. He had a copy of *Telemaque* in his hand: for the great, the profound philosopher, who collected in that fine analysis of human life in the abstract, the result of sixty years' experience, had been the guiding star by which our patient Claude had steered his own course through life. It was his practice always to revolve what he did, and to endeavour to justify his actions by seeking in the maxims of some great thinker for a precedent in harmony with the course he had taken.

"Have I done well," said he musing, "to trust my poor inexperienced boy to the wiles and snares and dangers of a capital? It is true that Martin is possessed of stronger sense, and finer and keener faculties than other young men, older than himself. But what then? It is not the sense and knowledge of what is right that preserves us from wrong. If it were so, very few would wander at all out of the paths of rectitude; for that degree of sagacity that is wanting to show us the distinction between good and evil is almost as common as human existence. But the heart is so weak, the mind is so disobedient to its own lessons, and there are so many allurements in the smiles and caresses of pleasure, that the sternest philosopher is not always proof to the temptations which beset him, and what we call virtue, is almost in every case, a delusive presentment, a fantastic screen, behind which the wanton joys disport though the world is not a spectator of their play. The conscience is awake, and tells us what we ought to do; but our wishes are so deaf to her admonitions. And then, those who espouse the cause of order and virtue, who are they? Why those who are provided in the first instance with a liberal abundance of the benefits, which the trespasser snatches from society because she withholds them from his grasp. Give a man plenty of food, and clothing, a good house to live in, a healthy and a handsome wife; let him have some leisure time to enjoy society, rural scenes, books, and the thousand varieties of a town or city life, and money sufficient to defray these expenses without at all trenching on the comforts of his family, and a man will obey the laws, because he can enjoy the fruits of social life without breaking them.

"But stint him in his food and raiment, or make them uncertain and precarious, deprive him of shelter, or instead of a house, kennel him and his family—if he have one—in a room with a herd of paupers, let his wages be so small, and his gains so often interrupted, that he shall neither have time of his own, nor a shilling to enjoy the hour he borrows from his work; lock him up within the buildings of a town till he shall forget the very colour of grass, and he will of course be at continual war with society; and unless he be superior to the average of men, he will violate every law that stands in the way of his enjoyment, though he may have sufficient cunning to hide his misdeeds.

"Misdeeds, indeed! So they are;—but the saucy churchman, who reprobates his conduct, should *copy* the great divine law-giver whom he quotes so frequently. When a priest or minister, with pendent cheeks, and the girdle of an alderman, goes up to a pale, cadaverous labourer, who has not eaten his fill once for several weeks, nor tasted a morsel of pleasant food for half a year, how can he expect the cold, shivering sufferer to listen to his reasonings?"

At this moment the worthy Claude Gerard heard a slight tap at the window. He stood up, and, moving towards the spot, inquired who was there.

"It's I, Mr. Claude,—Jean Sabot, one of your scholars."

The schoolmaster opened the door, and Jean Sabot, a tall young man, of some twenty years old, came in.

CLAUDE GERARD.

Well, my lad,—what can I do for you?

JEAN SABOT.

You have done enough for me, good Mr. Claude; it is not about myself I am come: I was thinking of our comrade, Martin, who is gone to Paris by the coach this morning:—how lucky for him!

CLAUDE GERARD.

Lucky!—That depends on the issue. Paris has been the ruin of a great many young men; and Martin did not seem to consider it a piece of good fortune.

JEAN SABOT.

I wonder at that;—I thought every body was glad to see the great city. What was Martin's objection?

CLAUDE GERARD.

He did not like to lose the society of his old friends, and go amongst strangers.

JEAN SABOT.

Oh! that was only the first feeling, which we all have, you know, good Mr. Claude, when we part

with our companions: he will soon overcome that amidst the pleasures of Paris.

CLAUDE GERARD.

No! I flatter myself I know him better. Martin may be a little smitten at first by the novelties he will see there, but he has too good a mind to forget his early comrades. Besides, there are more pains than pleasures in a great city; and Martin, who has been taught to love his fellow creatures as if they were all his brothers and sisters, will be more afflicted by the poverty of the tens of thousands than dazzled by the opulence and splendour of a few exceptions.

JEAN SABOT.

What! is there such misery in the capital as you describe?

CLAUDE GERARD.

Not such as I *describe*, Sabot; for no human being has ever described, or can conceive, the enormous mass of misery, wretchedness, and despair, that is collected together within the walls of a capital. We see it or hear of it only in detail—in fragments; and what we know is only a small portion of what exists.

JEAN SABOT.

But I thought the Parisians were a highly-educated race, and that education raises us above misery, partly by teaching us to avoid privation, and partly by teaching us to endure it when inevitable?

CLAUDE GERARD.

True;—education does produce this effect with many,—with Martin, for instance; because he has a fine generous nature: but the mass of mankind are not so susceptible of its influence, and they employ their faculties, when sharpened by instruction, as the instruments to provide for their enjoyment, not as fences to circumscribe their wishes.

JEAN SABOT.

But the educated are better than the ignorant in great cities.

CLAUDE GERARD.

They ought to be.

JEAN SABOT.

But are they not better, good Mr. Claude?

CLAUDE GERARD.

I am afraid not. The systems of education hitherto pursued in France have been very defective:—*they teach us to understand books instead of men,—to know what life ought to be—not what it is!* They begin where they should leave off; and a race of men calculated to benefit by such instruction, would already require no teaching. The consequence is, that the student who leaves his school to go into the world, finds that he has learned nothing at all to prepare him for the real business of life, and has to teach himself every thing useful after he has perforce become an actor in that world for which his first years ought to have been spent in preparing him. This terrible vice in education is the same as it would be in the army, supposing you were to teach a soldier to sharpen his sword and to clean his gun, and not his military exercises.

JEAN SABOT.

But still the uneducated must be worse than those who have received instruction?

CLAUDE GERARD.

I should wish to think so; but I am afraid that truth lies on the other side. Education in its present state either extinguishes the spirit in a good man, or perverts it in a bad one. A man of a gentle disposition is taught by education to withdraw himself from the busy world, and to indulge in a fantastic world of his own creation. A man of a bold, active character is apt to employ his acquirements in such a manner as to raise him as far above others as he can get; and as soon as he perceives that to succeed he must use deceit and artifice,—he does so without scruple.

JEAN SABOT.

If the world is chiefly made up of men who are vicious and selfish, we must do as others do, or we shall be thrown down and trampled on.

CLAUDE GERARD.

No! we can defend ourselves, and guard against persecution without imitating the wicked.

JEAN SABOT.

But man is always prone to copy man; and what is wrong does not always declare itself as wrong: so that a young inexperienced man like Martin, travelling for the first time to a city like Paris, and a stranger to its usages, may be won and captivated by its pleasing allurements, and corrupted before he is aware of it.

CLAUDE GERARD.

That would be the case with most young men—though perhaps not with Martin. He is pensive and thoughtful; and the best principles have been planted in his mind. He knows that the happiness of a man depends rather in diminishing and controlling his wants than in gratifying and extending them. I have taught him to distinguish between his animal and spiritual life—to limit the one, which, though it is but temporal, is the cause of our errors and sufferings, our quarrels and disquiets, our feuds with others, and our conflicts within ourselves, and to let desires and ambition take the wing only when his immortal spirit is concerned.

JEAN SABOT.

I know and honour your system which reduces our wants in the body to three, the appetites of HUNGER, LUST, and DRESS, all of which it is our interest to suppress as much as possible; otherwise the whole of life is consumed by the attempts we make to live, and we never make any progress to the aim of life itself.

CLAUDE GERARD.

Yes, those three appetites which we hold from nature, ought to be the counsellors and prompters of all we do, *until they are provided for and we cease to be thralls.* But the first of these appetites, HUNGER, is not provided for, so as to make life acceptable, in the case of one half the community of such a city as Paris. Supposing there is a population of one million of human souls in Paris, five hundred thousand of these never know what it is to master these appetites throughout their lives; and although a large portion of them may get one good meal a day, such is the uncertainty of their condition, the instability of their affairs, that the *fear of hunger* never ceases to haunt them even while they do contrive to supply their wants. One of the

many fearful consequences of this scourge is, that one at least in three of the women who help to constitute that half a million of human beings, sells her person for bread, not constantly, or in the same offensive manner as the street-walkers, but still at some period of their lives. The consequence is that the larger portion of women, who to their everlasting honour are chaste and virtuous, are nevertheless suspected and treated with ignominy, even by *the instructors of the people, who speak of them indiscriminately in their writings as if virtue had no existence amongst them.*

JEAN SABOT.

How dreadful!

CLAUDE GERARD.

Thence proceed two great evils: the poor man, not expecting chastity in his wife, revenges himself by preying upon as many women of his own condition as he can; and too many of these think there is no need of doing right when they have lost the credit of it; whilst the upper classes consider the women of all other grades as their natural concubines. Then comes the appetite of *dress* to aggravate the evil. The woman who has lost the chief distinction of her sex, now strives to excel other women, and to lure other men by the most extravagant personal adornments. She does not see how ridiculous she makes herself by dressing out of her sphere; and by putting on the garb without the manner of gentility. Virtuous women do not like to see themselves eclipsed by their inferiors, and they long to copy and excel the vicious in these external ornaments, since, by so doing, they hope to recover the affections which have been estranged from them. They will not debase themselves to gratify this appetite; but they fawn and supplicate, and worry their liege lords to furnish them with this finery: and as soon as a husband has given way to this importunity, he must next begin to decorate himself so as to match with his wife. Thus, mankind are pushed out of their frame;—one excess brings on another;—human wants, which are fixed and rigid, are succeeded by desires which are loose and boundless, and a moral pestilence, which the narrow intelligence of man cannot comprehend, begins to spread its corrosive influence over the land.

JEAN SABOT.

But really Mr. Claude, if society has come to such a state as this, the evil must be irrecoverable, and education can do nothing for it.

CLAUDE GERARD.

You are mistaken;—it might be recovered. The perfect system of the Almighty is there, to shed, like the sun, its beneficent light upon us. If ever there should be a system of education so sound as to teach us, not by maxims fastened upon the memory, but by *habits rooted in the heart*, that we must be guided *by duty* and not *by inclination*,—that our desires must be limited as our means of gratifying them are not infinite, and our lives are of short duration, a new and proper direction would be given to that ambition of excelling others which is now laying prostrate the whole civilised world, like a multitude of drunken soldiers within the walls of a captured fortress.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

THE MEMOIRS OF MARTIN.

THIRD PART.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST STRUGGLES FOR BREAD.

"THE sudden death of M. de Saint Stephen had subverted all my hopes, the disappearance of Bamboche had deprived me of the support I had expected to meet with, in that quarter.

"I found myself flung abroad in that wide and boundless Paris, to me unknown, without any resource but the miserable rags I wore, and *sixteen sous* in cash, which I had luckily preserved, as well as the pocket-book of Regina's mother.

"According to the landlord of the low lodging-house in which I had been robbed, I had only two chances left to avoid starvation.

"First, I might be taken up for some misdemeanour.

"Secondly, I might go to the river-side, or the play-houses, in doubtful expectation of gaining a few pence, either by lending a hand to carry loads or by opening the coach-doors.

"However probable, however true, might be the assertion of the lodging-house keeper, on the score of the want of work from hand to mouth, above all at this epoch, I would not at first give credit to his word.

"'There is,' said I to myself, 'in every parish, a magistrate whose door is never shut—night or day. I will apply immediately to him; and, no doubt, in the name of law and society, he will come to the assistance of an honest man, who requires nothing but employment.'

"On leaving the blind alley, I retraced my steps to the gate, and inquired for the house of the police magistrate in that district. They pointed it out to me; and I was shown in to his worship.

"In a few words, I related to him all that happened to me since my arrival in Paris, excepting however, in virtue of my promise to the landlord, the robbery to which I had been subject at the lodging-house.

"At first the magistrate was cold, reserved, and distrustful; but soon after, convinced of my sincerity, he appeared to commisserate my situation, and looking kindly at me, he replied:

"'The particulars you state, your style of expres-

sion, and my own knowledge of mankind, all convince me that you have spoken the truth; I believe your situation to be as deplorable as it is touching, but unfortunately I can do nothing in the matter—nothing whatever; I am even acting in disobedience to my duty by not taking you at once into custody, since, on your own admission, you have no means of subsistence, and nobody in Paris to claim you as a relative. Nay, I am perhaps doing you an injury in letting you go. The liberty I give you back I fear will only avail you to beg, and that is a misdemeanour which will send you to prison; but I won't abuse your confidence in me Your education can be of no use in a case so urgent. Your trade as a carpenter might answer in the spring, but is absolutely vain in winter.'

"'But after all, what am I to do, sir? what do you advise me?'

"'Alas! my poor boy, the only advice I can give you would be to surrender yourself up as a vagrant: in prison, at least, you would have shelter and bread; but then, you are so young, and there is so much contamination in a prison life, that it would expose an honest nature like yours to corruption. No doubt it is a melancholy case; but how can it be helped? the laws cannot foresee every thing.'

"'The laws cannot foresee an event, alas! so common, that an honest man, in spite of his readiness, can get no work,' cried I, in bitter despair; 'the laws which foresee aptly enough the countless misdemeanours that are committed, ought likewise to foresee the causes which lead men to commit them.'

"'What would you have? *that's how it is,*' answered the magistrate sorrowfully.

"Just then his secretary came to fetch him on account of some serious incident or other; so I took my departure with this grievous assurance that, omitting the coarseness of language, he had given me the same advice as the low lodging-house keeper.

"This new trial was heavy indeed, but I did not sink under it. I still possessed *sixteen sous;* now by living on two or three sous a day for bread, and paying four sous a night to sleep in a lodging-house, I had enough for two days to come, and I still trusted that some chance would turn up. So before I consented to try the hazardous courses recommended by my late host, I wished to endeavour to find out some less precarious mode of living.

"Saunteriug along the streets, I espied the small box of a street scrivener; a ray of hope darted into my mind: perhaps he might employ me. Christmas was at hand, and at that season of the year the poor people who cannot write themselves generally have occasion to express their compliments and good wishes to their relations or absent friends; I went in, therefore, bashfully and timidly to the scrivener's box; but he had scarcely heard my petition and offers of service, before he slammed the door in my face, as he saw in me the spirit of some future competitor.

"I wandered on hither and thither: and the next place I stopped at was a joiner's shop; as I knew the carpenter's trade which, in many points, closely resembles it, I ventured upon a new application to the master of the shop.

"'My lad,' said he to me, 'out of twenty clever workmen that I did employ during the season, I have now only five on hand, owing to the slackness in building; how the devil then can I employ you, who are a mere novice in the trade?'

"This was a fair objection, so away I went with a very heavy heart. Night came on; I was exhausted with want and weariness; I bought three sous' worth of bread at a baker's, and asked my way to the barrier of the Chopinette, intending to take my bed in the same lodging-house, the landlord being already a kind of acquaintance; but to reach the barrier, I must have crossed through Paris, for I was then in the neighbourhood of the Pont-Neuf. I next inquired if there were any lodging-houses in that district; they pointed out the lanes about the Louvre and Rue Saint-Honoré. I entered one of these dismal abodes; they asked me six sous instead of four, on account of the *distrust* and its proximity to the Palais-Royal; but these extra two sous required for my bed were equal to a day's food. But I was so harassed, and so frozen with cold, and felt so much need of rest, that I submitted to the sacrifice; and, more cautious this time, I went to bed with my clothes on, and put by in my pocket the seven last sous I had. It was not quite eight o'clock: the frequenters of those low suspicious dens did not come in till very late at night, so that I found every bed empty in the room. Who were my fellow-lodgers this night? I cannot tell, for I slept so soundly that the host had to rouse me up the next day at noon.

"Although certain beforehand that it was a useless inquiry, I asked the landlord if he could get me any employment. The man looked at me askance, and without my being able to understand the meaning of his suspicions, he rudely replied:

"'You are a police spy—you want to lay me a trap: but I am not so green as that comes to.'

"Then he continued ironically and with a stress on the words:

"'No, I have no employment for you.'

"Perceiving the useless results of all my attempts to obtain some honest work, my last resource, amounting to seven sous, not being enough to carry me beyond the day, I determined to follow the advice of my late host, where I had been stripped of my clothes.

"So I went to the wharf, Saint Nicholas. There I saw a number of men, clad still more shabbily than myself; they were helping to unload several large barges, and a few of them, in spite of the cutting cold of winter, were immersed up to their waists in water, were demolishing heaps of wood, or breaking up old boats no longer worthy.

"Among these busy workmen, I looked about for some open and good-natured countenance to whom I could confide my object. But unluckily they all seemed to me harsh, sulky, and brutal. Still as I observed amongst them one young man of my own age, who was drawing a huge block of wood with a rope fastened to his body, I went up and accosted him, saying:

"'Shall I assist you?'

"The young man mistook my offer for a taunt, and replied only with curses and insults.

"'I am in earnest,' said I to him, 'I am a stranger in Paris and without work. If you like, I will help you in yours, and you may give me what you please.'

"You do n't belong to Paris? and you come down to this wharf to crunch our bread! and we in winter too, when work is scant, that, for one man that our masters want, there are twenty come to offer themselves. We have but a small monthful of bread, and you wish to dig your grinders in it?' cried he.

"Then turning about to some of his comrades:

"'Here 's a *sneak!*' cried he in a passion. 'Fall upon the sneak! at him! at him!'

"This word, as I afterwards found out, signified a new competitor for work; I was instantly surrounded and threatened; it required all my spirit, courage, and resolution, together with my tolerable strength of body, to prevent my retreat being cut off or accelerated by ill treatment.

"My first impulse was to curse the hard-heartedness of men; but soon after pity succeeded to anger. In truth, the times were hard, the weather was rude, work was scarce and precarious, and to enter into competition with those poor wretches, as I was unintentionally about to do, was nothing less than *digging my teeth* in their last monthful of bread, as they so energetically expressed it.

"So, reluctantly retiring from the wharf, I went back to the quay, crossed over a bridge, and saw in the distance the long trail of smoke issuing from a steamer, which was sailing towards me. I went forth to meet her, in hopes of getting a job among the passengers, in carrying their luggage ashore; and truly, I soon descried a board intimating the spot where the passengers would get out; I hastened to advance towards the brink of the river, but there already stood a double line of men, and several ragged boys were pushing forwards to the strand, impatiently waiting with fierce and jealous looks, for the prey that was coming up. They exchanged insults, threats, and even blows in order to get hold of some good position to await the arrival. There must have been thirty of them, and, as well as I could see, as fast as the steamer drew near, there could not be above ten or twelve travellers on the deck of the vessel.

"Struck with invincible disgust, I drew off, and this time at least withdrew my competition from the old frequenters of that busy strand.

I sat down upon a post, in order to judge, by what I was about to see, what chance I might hope for another time. Hardly had the boat been moored before all those tattered carriers, with loud curses in their mouths, rushed tumultuously on the sloping bank where a plank had been thrown down to enable the passengers to land. Then I beheld a scene of hideous brutality: eight or ten of those youngsters, the boldest and the strongest, shared together the landing of the luggage, after having driven back with curses and with savage blows their less fortunate competitors. One unfortunate lad, about fifteen, had his face quite bloody, and his shrill voice might be heard mingling with those of his irritated fellow-candidates, who kept roaring and bellowing after the successful body of competitors bearing away the luggage in triumph.

"The sight of all that wretchedness, and the abject, cruel, and hateful sentiments it created gave me the most acute pain; I thought I never could resolve to gain my daily bread as a candidate in emulation with such creatures; I shuddered with disgust, with terror, and with pity as I looked upon those hollow, wild, and withered faces, which all bore the fatal stamp of poverty, vice or crime. The labourers on the wharf whom I had first applied to, had received me with threats and rudeness; but among them I had certainly not seen those examples of awful degradation so general among the wretched creatures, who rushed to meet the steamer; I now clearly saw the truth of what the landlord of the lodging-house had told me in respect to these men, most of whom, he had informed me, were malefactors or liberated convicts.

"Going up to a man, who appeared to me a chance spectator of the scene, I asked him whether the steam-boats landed there every day; he replied that there was one regularly night and morning, which came and went from the spot. This last information was of little consequence; for, when leaving Paris, the travellers usually sent their luggage by the porters attached to their hotels. The landing from the boat was the only prospect I had, and that on condition of entering into open contest with my dark and forbidding competitors.

"And yet, when I thought of it, in spite of my dire necessities, I experienced an intolerable loathing.

"I looked round me in dejection of spirits, when suddenly amidst the group of loiterers who had been baffled in their attempts to get a job, I distinguished the Rump-in-the-Bowl, followed by another dark-looking man, and a youth of fifteen; he left the bank and returned up to the quay.

"Then yielding to an involuntary impulse, I followed the bandit. Perhaps, thought I, he is going to rejoin Bamboche.

CHAPTER II.

MISFORTUNE FOLLOWS MISFORTUNE, DISAPPOINTMENT TREADS ON THE HEEL OF DISAPPOINTMENT, UNTIL YOUNG MARTIN LOSES ALL PATIENCE.

"The Rump-in-the-Bowl, accompanied by a man with a countenance no less repulsive than his own, and by the young lad, whose withered features already wore, like those of his more mature companions, a mean and cynical expression, soon left the quay and plunged into a labyrinth of dark narrow streets; after a long march, we reached one of the outward boulevards. A few stray houses lined this boulevard on one side; I saw the Rump-in-the-Bowl and his acolytes go into a kind of lodge about which several women of repulsive aspect were stealthily moving.

"In spite of the indefinite hope I entertained of recovering Bamboche, I paused on the threshold of that den, and the Rump-in-the Bowl filled me with so much horror, that I had not dared to address him and question him about my early comrade.

"I wondered how it was that the bandit was so bold as to show himself without any disguise after the discovery of the smugglers whose accomplice he seemed to be, as well as Bamboche, when all at once the noise of a scuffle, cries, and the sound of broken panes, attracted my attention and made me face about.

"This noise issued from the lodge which I had seen the malefactor go into. Just as I came up to it, a man, seemingly dead drunk, was turned out forcibly from that dismal abode; and the moment the door was being closed I caught sight of the Rump-in-the-Bowl and his friend in the dark shadow of the passage; whilst at a dormer-window above, was visible the dishevelled head of a woman, behind which peeped the wasted countenance of the lad of fifteen. Both of them railed and scoffed at the drunken man who had just been thrust from the house; but the latter, staggering and holding by the trees of the boulevard, kept laughing aloud every moment and exclaiming that he had been robbed.

"A feeling of curiosity, mingled with pity, urged me to advance a step or two towards the victim of the banditti. But judge my astonishment! I remembered him to be the man with the patrician manners whom I had met before at the tavern of the *Three Butts*.

"I felt an emotion of bitter joy, as I perceived the drunken state of that personage; my first thought was to induce him to talk, in order to ascertain whether the Regina whose name he had drawn on the table at the inn was my own Regina, and after that to learn from that singular man what connexion existed between him and her, and whether she were then in the capital.

"The idea of surprising a secret in that manner was improper, I acknowledge; but the interest I took in the young lady served me as an excuse; if that stranger was either beloved by her, or an admirer, how the importance of my two meetings with him would be increased.

"'Those wretches have robbed you, sir?' said I to him, going cautiously up to him lest he might remember me as the guest he had met at the *Three Butts*.

"He stared at me in vacant astonishment, rocking about on his legs, and replied with a fresh shout of laughter:

"'They have quite cleared me out. I had spent the night in that hovel; we were five of us—or six may be: among the lot was a rag-picker, a very brisk, lively fellow, and some women—oh! such charming women! so free and hearty! Really there 's no other place like it for a jolly spree.'

"Here the stranger clung to my arm to save himself from falling.

"I looked at the man with as much surprise as pity: seen in open day, his features looked even purer and finer than before; and though he had that moment emerged from a protracted and degrading revel, his face appeared fresh, and almost in repose; finally, in spite of the disorder of his hair and attire, in spite of the stagger in his gait, the mildness and suavity of his voice, the sort of dignity of manner which he retained in the midst of his intoxication, every moment betrayed the loftiness of his rank.

"'You ought to return home, sir,' said I to him; 'shall I conduct you to a hackney-coach stand?'

"I was sifting him for his abode.

"'You are a very polite man, sir, in spite of your Greek cap and your blouse,' said he with semi-comical urbanity; 'you offer your hand to a drowning man—sunk in wine—that shows good taste. But I thank you—I won't go home till night. You understand—you so polite a man—in spite of your Greek cap—that being perfectly drunk, I cannot return in this state to my people.'

"'You are right,' said I, looking stedfastly in his face; 'but if Miss Regina knew that——'

"He did not give me time to conclude; his countenance, just before so good-natured and jocular, suddenly turned serious and anxious: for a moment the fumes of the wine were half dispersed, under the influence of the deep astonishment he felt; he stood up erect—his step appeared to be firmer; then, with a lofty, commanding, and almost passionate look, he exclaimed:

"'What right have you to use that name, sir?'

"'I use the name of Miss Regina,' continued I, 'without suffering myself to be brow-beaten; Miss Regina—the baron's daughter.'

"'The Baron de Noirlieu's daughter!' cried he; 'you know her, do you?'

"Then he broke off, and suddenly withdrawing his arm from mine he fell back a step and eyed me with a surprise and curiosity mixed with distrust.

"But, as I had anticipated, his return to sense was transient; gradually his consciousness gave way, as the influence which the name of Regina had conjured up was dissipated. His attitude was once more broken and staggering; he shook his head, and resumed with an air which he strove to make as sly and arch as possible:

"'Oh! oh! my worthy sir, in your Greek cap and blouse, you know enough. Are you not some rival in disguise? That would be pleasant. I only thought there were two—that Robert de Mareuil, the friend of her childhood, and that ugly upstart—that ripe, very—very ripe fellow named——'

"Here the stranger broke off again, smiled knowingly, and continued:

"'There you are quite dumbfounded; I only say what I think. Ah! you are playing the spy—that's not at all civil, my dear fellow; but no matter, I know how to elude you if you—if you talk——'

"The name of Robert de Mareuil, uttered by the stranger, recalled to my mind the scene in the forest of Chantilly—little Viscount Scipio and that other boy named Robert, whose assiduous attention to Regina on that occasion had fired me with jealousy.

"No doubt that Robert was the *friend of childhood*—the rival alluded to. As for the second rival, the *ugly upstart*—the *very ripe fellow*, I was altogether ignorant of him.

"Desirous of obtaining more positive intelligence, I said to the stranger:

"'You are mistaken, sir, as to my motives. I——'

"'Ah! ah! you wanted to set me a-talking, my worthy with your Greek cap,' resumed the stranger. 'I am not so drunk as I may seem, you see.'

"'I was speaking to you of Miss Regina de Noirlieu,' said I, 'because her family lived in the same county as I did.'

"'Regina?' said the stranger, feigning surprise: 'I have not the honour to know that young lady.'

"'And yet you often go to her father's house, you know—the Baron of Noirlieu?—who lives in the Rue de——'

"Here I hoped he would have concluded the address.

"But he went on:

"'Since I tell you I do n't know her, I can't go to visit her father; you only want to set me a-talking.'

"'It was you, sir, who first spoke to me of Miss Regina.'

"'Since I do n't know her I can't speak to you about her, can I?'

"And henceforward, with the unyielding obstinacy of a drunkard, he stuck to this course of answering every question I put to him concerning Regina, nor could I obtain any farther information.

"Thus discoursing together, we had strayed along the boulevard, and began to perceive the gate in the distance, when the stranger starting, said with a strange doubtful look:

"'I say, my worthy with your Greek cap, here's a capital joke. You want to set me a-talking. Suppose I give you in charge for having robbed me—I should then find out who you are.'

"'Pass me off for a thief? The joke would have no meaning,' said I to him; 'for here is all they would find about me.'

"And then I showed him the few coppers I had left.

"'It would still be so much recovered,' replied he, bursting into a loud laugh.

"Thereupon he seized hold of my hand to snatch the sous which his sudden grasp shook to the ground. He then flung himself upon me, and straining me to him, called out *thief* with all his might.

"We were close to the barrier, where I saw a sentinel on duty. Terrified at the consequences which might follow this arrest, and unfortunately having no time left to pick up my money which lay scattered in the mud, I shook off my adversary whose cries grew louder and louder, and rushed through the open fields at a very rapid pace.

"Haunted by the dread of an arrest, I walked on till nightfall—so early at that season of the year. I was in the midst of the fields; I perceived a village on my left, and on my right several corn-mills, reminding me of those in which many a time before, Bamboche, Basquine, and I had rested for the night during our vagrant ramblings.

"Not having a single sou left, I thought it most prudent to pass the night under the shelter of one of these mills, instead of returning to Paris to wander about the streets till morning. Having lived on very scanty fare for two days, and having fasted since yesterday, I began to feel the sharp pangs of hunger. I looked about me to see whether I could not discover any piece of vegetable ground sown with roots; but the whole common was bare and wrinkled with furrows; in the course of a few minutes I came up to the mills: two of them lay very close together. Night had fully set in: I pulled out a few handfuls of straw, spread them over the ground, and lay down upon them, covering myself with the remains of another truss; the weather was damp but not cold; and this burrow promised me at least a tolerably safe asylum.

"Whilst I bitterly deplored the loss of my last coppers—my whole treasure, I felt a sad consolation when I remembered that Regina was in Paris, and that I was master of a secret concerning her of great consequence. I could no longer doubt it: either this unknown gentleman was her lover, or her admirer; and in either case, my mind was lost in the inquiry how a man who either loved or was loved by that lovely and noble girl could so habitu-

ally give way to a scandalous course of depravity. As for the secresy in which his wild propensities had hitherto been involved, that was obvious enough and was accounted for by the choice of distant and remote haunts, in which I had twice fallen into his company.

"These reflections had sufficient influence over me to prevent me, for some time, from bestowing my thoughts upon the future; but afterwards I returned to them, and was once more overwhelmed by the impending dangers of my state of affairs; it would require nearly five days before I could receive any answer from Claude Gerard, and I had no means of paying the postage when it arrived. And how was I to live in the interim? where was I to sleep at night? Though my life had often been sorely tried before, still *chance** had hitherto so far befriended me as to protect me from those dreadful racking pangs of hunger which now for the first time I began to feel.

"For a short interval I hoped to retrieve in sleep both rest and the forgetfulness of want. But, to my bitter disappointment, I continued awake almost the whole night, saving a few transient slumbers full of trouble and undefined alarm. The dampness gradually increased and became so irksome that, long before day, I was compelled to issue from my burrow, shivering with cold and so fully spent and subdued by hunger, that I only thought of one thing—to eat, regardless of the means I took to obtain bread.

"With a quick, feverish step, I advanced towards the capital, saying to myself with a wild and determined energy:

"'Now for the landing-place of the steam-boat; away with disgust—away with fear; I feel prepared and ready for any thing: I must find somebody's luggage to carry—*I am hungry!*'

"Oh! then it was—then only, for the first time, that I was able to conceive the implacable, the dreadful, the atrocious feelings that were combined with those three words—I AM HUNGRY!

"By the time I reached the landing place of the steamer, it was broad day; several loungers of the day before had already gathered on the bank; I forgot my disgust, my loathing, at the sight of those hideous wretches contending for a few casual jobs; I plunged boldly into the midst of the ragged throng.

"'What do you want here, you?' said one of the stoutest of the band.

"'I come to carry the travellers' luggage.'

"'What you?'

"'Yes, me.'

"'Go back.'

"'Yes, yes, go back,' repeated several voices.

"The blood gushed into my face, a crowd of angry, jealous, savage feelings awoke in me for the first time.

"'You won't let me stand here,' said I, grinding my teeth with fury.

"'No, cut away,' said one of the ruffians, giving me a rough push.

"I was mad; and seizing my adversary by the throat, I hurled him down the shelving bank; a second had, I fear, his jaw broken; I felt more than a mortal strength in me at the time; my temples throbbed as if they were going to burst, my ears were filled with a buzzing sound.

"'Is that enough?' cried I, 'Does anybody wish for more.'

"The cowardice of those wretches proved how much they were degraded: not one answered to the challenge; my spirit—my strength had awed them; their hatred no doubt was increased, but they were obliged to stifle it. In spite of their muttered complaints, I kept my post in front; and lucky I did: the steamer was at hand.

"'You are right to pummel them, the blackguards,' said a hoarse husky voice which methought I remembered.

"I turned about—it was the Rump-in-the-Bowl once more.

"'I don't know you,' said I abruptly.

"'Nor I neither; but you hit hard,—I like that. I will be your chum.'

"'I don't want any chum,' replied I, turning away, for the passengers were coming out.

"The Rump-in-the-Bowl glanced at me strangely and vanished.

"The passengers were less numerous than the day before. In the front rank I observed a tall man, in a long whiteish frock-coat; the lower part of his face was buried in a red woollen comforter. He had on a pair of blue-tinted spectacles, and his travelling cap, made of fur, and with side lappets to screen the ears, completed his disguise. This traveller in particular drew my attention by the eagerness he evinced to land: twice had he stepped towards the edge of the boat, and had been stopped by one of the sailors, who no doubt gave him to understand that the time for landing had not yet come.

"This traveller carried a cloak and bag in one hand, and a toilet *necessaire* in the other; his large leather trunk lay at his feet. The signal to land was given. I had fixed my choice on the traveller in spectacles. Two competitors wanted to go first; but I pushed by them, and at one leap sprang up to my traveller, who said to me hurriedly:

"'Quick, quick! take up this trunk, and the toilet case, whilst I carry the bag. There 's a stand of coaches on the quay.'

"The trunk was not heavy. To tell the joy I felt as I raised it on my shoulder would be impossible. I was going to earn a few sous and buy bread. So I followed the traveller with his luggage, as he advanced with rapid strides before me.

"Striving to keep pace with him in spite of the burden I carried, I stumbled over a stone, and the sudden jerk caused the trunk to slide almost to the earth. Whilst stooping to raise it again, I saw a card fastened on the lid; I glanced at it unwittingly, and read:

"'*Count Robert de Mareuil.*'

"That name recalled to my mind, the hints which had fallen from the stranger in his fit of drunkenness, and the scene in the forest of Chantilly. This traveller then was the friend of Regina's early days, the rival of the unknown.

"As I was immersed in these reflections, I heard a loud uproar; and close before us stood a large crowd of people; soon after the crowd made way, the traveller advanced towards me, and said in an altered voice to two men who appeared to watch him and to attach themselves to his steps:

"'You see, gentlemen, I have some luggage with me.'

"'Very well, Count,' replied one of the men, 'your things shall be conveyed to the coach. Come my lad, step out,' added the man making me a sign to follow him.

"We passed through the tumultuous throng, and I heard the words *prison, disguise, treason,* uttered by various parties among them.

"There was a coach waiting on the quay: the traveller got in; his luggage was placed by his side, and one of the two men, before stepping into the vehicle, said to the coachman:

"'Drive on—and go fast.'

"After closing the door, and in spite of the surprise produced by this new and strange event, I said to the parties:

* Why not Providence? surely Eugene Sue does not dispute that great article in our common faith as Christians, whether Protestants or Catholics, which assigns a continual and watchful care to the Almighty over all creation.—*Translator's note.*

"'Pay me, gentlemen; it was I carried the luggage.'

"'Nonsense, from the boat to this; a fine piece of work, truly, to be paid for.'

"'The Count has no change,' added the other man, jeeringly, and looking at the traveller, who, with his face buried in his hands, appeared lost to every thing.'

"'But, gentlemen,' exclaimed I.

"'Drive on, coachman,' cried one of them through the coach window.

"The coachman lashed his horses; I was forced to spring aside to avoid being crushed under the wheels.

"This was a fearful disappointment in my case!

"In my desperation and rage, I held up my fist to the coach, and cried out:

"'You rob me of my bread, and I am starving.'

"'Come and breakfast,' said a voice in my ear.

"I turned sharply about.

"It was he again—the Rump-in-the-Bowl.

"'Come and breakfast,' repeated he. 'You are a resolute lad. You hit famously. I like a brave lad who hits hard. I'll stand treat to-day—you shall do so to-morrow. No affront, you see; so step along.'

"*I was hungry*——

"I accepted the Rump-in-the-Bowl's offer.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN AN HONEST MAN IS PUSHED OUT OF THE PALE OF SOCIAL LIFE, AND TOLD TO GO TO THE DEVIL, HE CAN'T HELP WHAT HE DOES.

"I FELT ashamed and humbled in accepting the malefactor's offer, *but I was hungry*.

"After we had walked on a few steps, the bandit put his arm very familiarly under mine. I shuddered at the contact, and let go at once.

"'What the devil ails you?' said he, surprised at my action.

"'I won't take your arm.'

"'What! this to a comrade?'

"'I am not your comrade.'

"'I stand a breakfast, and yet you are not my comrade. So, so—are you proud? Then, good morning; I don't like proud people.'

"'I am not proud,' said I, hesitating.

"'Then, give me your arm.'

"Thus was I obliged to take the arm of that ruffian; I let fall my head annihilated with shame. One moment, I thought of shaking off that man; but I felt most painfully the vertigo caused by long fasting; my strength, hitherto sustained by feverish excitement, began to sink. Two or three times, a sudden faintness made me stagger, and in spite of the cold, the perspiration streamed from my forehead. As I walked along in that state by the malefactor's side, I felt a secret kind of dismay, for I reflected on the fatal consequences which hunger might induce.

"Then, invoking two sacred images, hallowed by my memory, Claude Gerard and Regina:

"Would they tax me with reproof, reduced to my desperate condition, in spite of all my efforts to escape it, for accepting the offer of this pitiful wretch? And besides, this life of mine, which I am wrenching out of the grip of famine, may be useful to Regina, now that I am on the scent of a secret which concerns her.

"Plunged in these reflections, silent, dejected, with my head cast down to hide my confusion, I hung by the arm of my grim-visaged companion.

"'You are no babbler,' said he.

"'No.'

"'You hit better than you talk; be it so. It 's as a bold smash-pate I have invited you to breakfast. Ah, here we are in front of the ken. Come go first, my honoured guest.'

"Then the bandit pushed me into a tavern, situated at the corner of a lane near the river side.

"'Let us have a private room,' said the malefactor to the wench who waited on us.

"'One is more at ease,' said he to me, 'and can talk more freely.'

"They led us into a gloomy hole, with a window looking into a dark yard.

"We sat down to table.

"'What will you have to eat?'

"'Home bread.'

"'A smart reply; what else?'

"'Nothing. Only some bread and water.'

"'What! Bread and water?' said the ruffian astounded. 'Do you think that 's my way of treating, and that I invite my friend to give him a prison breakfast? Here, girl, let us have an omlette and bacon, a slice of beef with girkins, a piece of cheese, and two bottles of wine.'

Then turning to me with self-complacency.

"'That 's how I treat my friends.'

"'It 's of no use—let me have some bread directly; I won't eat any thing else.'

"'There 's a soldier's appetite for you! Here, girl, some bread.'

"They brought me a hunch of a loaf, full two pounds in weight, which I devoured in a few seconds.

"'Girl! a quartern loaf this time,' said the bandit grinning.

"The quartern loaf was brought in. My appetite, though appeased, was far from satisfied yet; but I was afraid an excess of food might injure me. I drank two or three glasses of water, and then broke off.

"By degrees I felt my spirits revive. The kind of fever which had seized upon me, passed away, and I looked my situation in the face more boldly, and with less desperation.

"The bandit had been watching me in silence, whilst I was devouring the bread; then he said to me:

"'This is all very well so far. You have just eaten to stay your hunger; but now you shall eat for your palate.'

"'No.'

"'Nonsense.'

"They brought in the dishes ordered by the Rump-in-the-Bowl; but all he could do, he could not prevail upon me to touch them.

"'You are a queer fellow,' said he, as he did honour to the cheer; 'I never saw such a guest—at least you will take a glass of wine.'

"At first I held out my glass, hoping that a little wine would completely renovate my strength; but, I was afraid, that in the state of weakness which I still was conscious of, the wine might affect my head, so I declined.

"'How, not even a glass of wine?' cried the Rump-in-the-Bowl.

"'No; but I 'll take another bit of bread, if you like,'

"'May the devil be your baker,' cried the bandit. 'Had I known this before——'

"Then looking at me askance:

"'You are not what I took you for, perhaps—you seem over-much sober.'

"'What did you think I was?'

"'I took you for a game fellow who fears nothing, and who was hungry—that was worth finding: that was, for me, and for you both. But you drink nothing but water—you eat dry bread; and that puzzles me.'

"'When a man is sober,' said I to the ruffian looking steadfastly at him, that I might catch his thoughts, 'he is more active in body, more steady in mind, and apter at any thing.'

"'You are right in one respect; drunkenness

may baffle the best business. But, tell me, since you were starving this morning, the same thing may happen again to-morrow, or soon after, unless you have some better bankers than those travellers and their luggage. I know that trade; you won't even get water to drink by it. So, take a glass of wine?'

"'No.'

"'What a deuce of a fellow!'

"'What other trade would you speak of?'

"'Listen: you are young, strong, active, and game; that's current gold, my lad—if you know how to turn it to account; besides you are not known *on change*, for you are not a Parisian; I can see that directly.'

"'I have only been in Paris three days.'

"'Splendid!—oh, if instead of being old—I was in your place.'

"'What would you do?'

"The malefactor winked with one eye, and said, after a pause:—

"'Umph! you are rather hasty.'

"And again he was silent, and stroked his chin with a self-satisfied look.

"For the last few moments, Bamboche's name was on my lips, but I was afraid that the robber might grow suspicious and not answer me. At length, unable any longer to restrain my curiosity:—

"'What of Bamboche?' said I on a sudden.

"The Rump-in-the-Bowl started on his chair.

"'Do you know Bamboche?' he exclaimed.

"'Or Captain Hector Bamboche, if you prefer it;'—but as I saw his astonishment was being changed into distrust, I added:—

"'Stay; I will be candid with you: it was I who went three days ago, to the blind alley, to inquire for Bamboche, and you it was, I think, who answered my questions.'

"'Ah! it was you, was it? and what did you want with Bamboche?'

"'We had been companions in our early days; I was in Paris without money or friends—I went to ask Bamboche to assist me. Now tell me where he is.'

"'So, you knew Bamboche's character—and yet you called to ask his assistance? That looks better; now we may come to an understanding,' said the ruffian, re-assured.

"'But where is Bamboche?'

"'Do n't bother yourself about him, my lad; I will do as much for you as he could himself.'

"'But still, where is he at present?'

"'He?"

"'Yes; the house you lived in was broken into by the police. I saw the soldiers next morning in the blind alley.'

"The birds had already taken to flight: they only caught the young ones in the nest.'

"'Bamboche fled as well as you. Where is he?'

"'Far away—in China by this time.'

"'Bamboche was in Paris three days ago,' exclaimed I; 'he must still be here.'

"Look for him, then, and find him, if you can; but, what do you want with him, since I offer to replace him in serving you?'

"'Thank you.'

"'You are wrong: Bamboche is young, full of *ability*, whilst I am old and sinking, and therefore want a *clerk*.'

"'What for?'

"After a pause, the ruffian continued:—

"'Where do you lodge?'

"'I am houseless.'

"'Well, I have a room; we can lodge together—you shall want for nothing—look here.' And then he displayed a dozen five-franc pieces, and among them glittered several pieces of gold.

"I could not disguise my astonishment at the sight: the ruffian saw it, and said:—

"'You wonder at my going to the wharf, since I am so well stocked, do n't you?'

"'Yes, I do wonder.'

"'I only go to look about me. The last day or two I have been trying to meet with a *clerk*—I saw you this morning, and am sure you would suit me. Come, drink.'

"'No.'

"'How headstrong you are. But never mind; let us settle matters, and live together. You won't regret it.'

"'Will you tell me where Bamboche is?'

"'Not so green; he would snap you up himself.'

"'I thank you for your bread,' said I, standing up, 'if ever I prosper, I will repay you.'

"'Are you going?'

"'Yes.'

"'Come, let me talk to you; zounds

"'It 's of no use.'

"'Where shall you sleep to-night?'

"'I hope to earn a few pence this evening, when the people leave the theatres.'

"'So, so!' said the Rump-in-the-Bowl, reflecting; 'you know already the best and most likely spots. You decline my offer—no matter. Sooner or later I shall nab you again. I can bide till you want me.'

"I took a hasty leave of the malefactor, who bawled out after me:—

"'*I can bide till you want me.*'

"Notwithstanding all my inexperience, I understood through the half-expressed meaning of the bandit, that, on seeing the proofs of strength and spirit I had given at the landing-place, the ruffian calculated on turning to good account the destitute state I was in, and to make me his tool in the commission of some crime—especially when he learnt that I had been so intimate with Bamboche, and was thoroughly acquainted with his mode of life.

"At first I sickened at the bare thought: not of becoming his accomplice—such an idea never entered my mind—but of having henceforward the least connexion with him. Then followed a reflection full of dreadful consciousness—that hunger had induced me to stoop to accept his alms.

"To what fearful extremities can hunger and poverty conduct us!' said I to myself with piercing sorrow, 'since I, who have been imbued with the strongest principles—I who feel in my heart a kind of divine worship for what is right, have so far degraded myself for bread? What then, O God! must become of those, who, delivered over to all the hazards of life, *without education*, without support, without faith, without any salutary restraint, are thrown into the same state of distress?'

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"During the rest of the day, and whilst I was waiting for the close of the theatres, I strained all the powers of my fancy, to find a means of earning a living by some safe and upright course; but my mind could contrive nothing better than a set of schemes, all of which were impracticable.

"The impression I was labouring under was singular, and painful indeed, as I saw the throng of people come and go, none of whom suspected, alas! that the wretched outcast, whom they passed by without heeding, did not know where he should burrow for that gloomy winter's night, and whom they might find on the morrow stretched on the earth, starving with cold and hunger.

"The perplexity I was in, and the uncertainty I felt of earning wherewithal to pay my bed, filled me with alarm. To be taken up in the night as a vagrant, and carried off to prison, was worse than death; for, in prison I could no longer be of service to Regina, and there was an inward voice which assured me that I was destined to render a great service to her, in spite of my low and obscure condition.

"When it grew dark, I went and took up my post about the Gymnase theatre. I thought I re-

membered most of the faces of those who were lounging like myself, as the same I had seen at the river side in the morning, waiting for the steamer. These loiterers were, most of them, seated—some on the edge of the pavement, others behind the coaches and cabs, a long row of which extended as far as the gate of Saint Denis.

"When I looked upon the gay scene, and saw those brilliant carriages crossing each other in every direction, God is my witness, that I felt no envy or jealous hatred; but I merely observed inwardly to myself:

"These happy people little dream that now at this very moment others are waiting in cruel suspense and all the agony of despair, and for many hours, to earn a few pence to buy bread, and pay for a night's lodging in some wretched hole, and that if to-night and to-morrow their hopes are deceived, hunger and famine stare them in the face, and the day after they may sink down and die.

"This reflection reminded me that Claude Gerard said to me one day the following sensible words:—

"'Morally, and justly speaking, to give alms is certainly an act which degrades the receiver, whilst to give him employment is at once to assist and honour him; but taking into consideration the present state of things in these unhappy times, we must not object to the custom of giving alms, in spite of all the perils that attend it; for there is at least an immediate result which accompanies the dispensation. And consequently there is another principle,—and a most vital one it is, which ought to be introduced into the education of the children of the wealthy classes, and that is, as a standing rule and measure of comparison, that, for instance, *with ten pennyworth of bread you can in reality prevent ten human beings from dying of starvation.*'

"Then is it fair?—is it just?—is it reasonable,—and whilst such things happen have we a right to call ourselves a civilized people?—that we should be subject every living day to the horror of reading accounts of those dreadful deaths which hunger produces in our capital? Sometimes they come to us in the shape of actual and immediate starvation, and the body of a fellow-creature, gifted like ourselves with an immortal soul, sinks exhausted with actual want and dies for lack of a few crumbs of bread to sustain it: sometimes it comes to appal us in the shape of suicide, when the poor sufferer, driven mad, partly by the contemplation of what he has already borne, and partly by the terror of relapsing into the same fits of agony, anticipates with his own hand the intolerable pangs which his ruthless fellow-creatures will not protect him from. Then the victim ignites the secret charcoal-pan and stops up every crevice in his chamber, cultivating with sedulous care the approaches of that dissolution which he is brought by the avarice of men to look upon as a state of bliss. And then only to think of the sums that are wasted daily in this great city! If we say that on an average three persons die here daily through scantiness of provisions (not immediately of starvation) it may be about the truth. But the waste of provisions alone, without aborting or trenching upon the larger subject—the waste of money, would be sufficient to give sustenance to twenty thousand families of our honest labourers.

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"I had waited for the close of the theatre, seated at the foot of one of the trees on the boulevard, in a dark corner over against the causeway where the theatre stood. I was broken with weariness, and half slumbered.

"All at once I felt myself rudely shaken. I opened my eyes, and perceived that I was surrounded by a troop of ill-looking fellows, among whom I recognised several that I had already seen; at the same moment, I thought I saw, by the light of the suspended lamp, on the opposite side, the dark and mocking countenance of the Rump-in-the-Bowl grinning like Mephistopheles at my critical situation: but so rapid, so transient was the apparition, that I could hardly fix my eyes upon it, especially as my alarm increased every moment, at the threatening attitude of the people who had thronged around me.

"'What do you want?' I said to them, springing to my feet to stand upon my guard.

"'You are a spy!' answered one; 'we know it.'

"And then immediately, before I could foresee the attack, they seized me from behind, clapped a handkerchief over my mouth, and tied it behind my head as a gag; then, in spite of my desperate struggles to get loose, I felt a shower of blows fall upon me: I was driven and almost carried into one of the small lanes behind the theatre; the handkerchief stifled my cries; the host of my assailants paralyzed my strength. This attack was so sudden and quickly sustained that I was already thrown into a dark passage, and upset on the floor, before I had had time to know where I was. The bustle occasioned by this fray was no doubt hardly noticed by the by-standers in the street, or else they must have considered it as one of those low and ignominious scuffles which are not uncommon in the purlieus of the theatre.

Thrown down on the stone floor of the passage, pounded with blows, several of which had drawn blood from my face, at last my head fell heavily against a stone: so great was the shock, that I almost fainted away; and in the midst of the stupor which came over me as I lay there with quick shooting pains as if my skull was cracked, I heard a rough voice exclaim—

"'He's had enough. Let us go. The people are coming out.'

"After this a pretty long interval elapsed, during which I had no other consciousness, save that of acute pains, and then, by degrees, I recovered my senses. I was stiff with cold, and my limbs were locked up; I tried to get up, and after much ado succeeded, and almost without knowing what I did, I staggered out of the passage. The night was pitch-dark, the street quite empty; and a shower of snow was falling—the effect of the open air brought me to again. I then was able clearly to remember the cowardly assault which I had endured at the hands of my jealous antagonists, instigated by the malefactor.

"It must have been very late; for the boulevard completely overlaid with snow, was entirely deserted: one hackney-coach alone remained, and it was standing at the corner of the Rue Poissonniere.

"After crawling along a few yards, I was obliged to stop, and was seized with a fit of shivering. My teeth chattered against each other; my knees shook; I felt on a sudden in my head, and especially in my right ham, so piercing a sensation, that I could hardly put one foot before the other—it seemed as if my bones were coming asunder, and my head parting across.

"But hark! there is the sound of distant footsteps, which falling in a measured tread upon the earth, made me shudder with affright, for it was the patrol of the night going their rounds. My ragged clothes torn to ribbons in the scuffle, my bloody face, no lodging to name as my own,—every circumstance conspired to hold me up as a vagrant, and cause me to be arrested, should the soldiers pounce upon me at that moment.

"I wanted to escape—but my sufferings were too great: I stumbled anew at every step.

"The distinct and sounding tramp of the parrol came nearer and nearer—I already perceived a short

way before me in the lightsome shadow of the covered walk, the shining points of the soldiers' guns. I made another effort,—but all in vain:—I sunk down upon my knees in the snow.

"'My God! my God!' cried I; and then I burst into tears, for I had no strength to get up.

"All at once a man started out from behind one of the trees,—caught hold of me under my armpits, and raising me up, said—

"'Here comes the patrol:—you will be taken to prison.'

"Again it was the voice of the Rump-in-the-Bowl. He had no doubt been skulking about and watching me since the assault which he had himself incited against me to encompass his ends.

"'Tell me now—will you come along with me?' he continued; 'or let yourself be nabbed? Do you hear? they are close upon us.'

"'Let us fly!—help me along!' cried I, in dismay.

"'Cheer up, lazy bones,' added the robber, in a jeering tone.

"He led me off; and leaning on his arm, I was enabled to cross the boulevard.

"'Coachman!—make haste—open your vehicle,' said the Rump-in-the-Bowl, to the driver of the coach, which I had already noticed.

"I got into the carriage with my grim-visaged companion:—the door was closed upon us just at the moment the soldiers of the night-watch came up to the spot where I had sunk down upon the snow.

"Oh! Claude Gerard—my benefactor—my friend—my counsellor—what would your chivalrous heart have felt at that moment, had you seen me take refuge in the arms of that merciless and abandoned villain, whose pernicious maxims had first corrupted Bamboche, and then Basquine and myself through his example.

"'Oh! Regina! what would your pure angelic spirit have conceived, had you seen your secret adorer take the hand which had pillaged the sepulchre of your beloved mother?'

"But there is no end to the various phases of the unnatural and the horrible in human life, when a man loses his hold upon society, and is driven out among the reprobates who live in continual war with those who have disclaimed them, and whose deadly enmity, like the hunger of the wolves, seems never to be satiated by what it feeds upon.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT YOUNG MARTIN SAW IN THE MALEFACTOR'S DEN;—HIS REFLECTIONS THEREIN, WITH SOME PHILOSOPHICAL REMARKS MADE BY THE RUMP-IN-THE-BOWL ON THE BENEVOLENCE OF THE EVIL-DOERS.

"THE coach rolled along for a considerable time, during which drive the malefactor—for what reason I cannot tell—did not once speak to me. That silence—the rocking of the coach—the warmth I felt within it, after all I had suffered from the cold, produced so general a stiffness throughout me as almost extended to my mind. The fatality which, a second time, had brought me into contact with the ruffian, seemed to me like a painful dream: but the carriage stopped, and put an end to my reverie.

"My companion, after shaking me several times, helped me to alight. My bruises still smarted, and made me endure most cruel pains. I did not know the part of the city I was in. Guided by the robber, on whose arm I was compelled to lean, I first crossed through a long yard or passage, lined on all sides with houses: then, following the meandering course of a winding alley, we reached another building, the door of which he opened with a latch-key, when we found ourselves in utter darkness.

"'Give me your hand;—let me show you the way,—and follow me,' said the Rump-in-the-Bowl.

"I cannot describe the feeling of horror and disgust which came over me when I felt my hand in that of the malefactor. A childish terror, probably caused by the weakness of my brain, prompted me to consider this casual junction of our hands as the guage of some compact between us.

"He stopped at the top of a steep flight of stairs,—opened the door — shut it behind us,—kindled a light by means of a lucifer match, and having lighted a candle, we entered a somewhat spacious apartment at the end of a narrow gallery. The said chamber was so clogged and encumbered with articles of every description, that hardly any room was left for the bed and furniture. One half of the window, whose yellow curtains were closely drawn over each other, was encroached upon by a large heap of bundles piled upon one another.

"'There 's a bed,—lie down and sleep: to-morrow morning we will have a talk; and, if necessary, we will call in a doctor,' said the bandit. 'You will see that I am not altogether so big a devil as I seem.'

"Then, drawing one of the mattresses off the bed, he stretched it on the floor,—took one of the many bundles in the room by way of pillow,—blew out the candle and prepared himself to sleep.

"Morally and physically exhausted as I was, and too dejected even to think, I felt for a time an unspeakable sense of comfort and well-being as I threw myself on that bed, where I fell asleep immediately, having spent the previous night in the midst of the fields, soaked with wet, and in a state of painful unrest and disquiet.

"When I awoke the next morning it was light; but the thickness of the drawn curtains caused a semi-obscurity to pervade the room. I heard the pleasant snorting of a stove, the brisk fire within which was reflected on the red tiles of the floor. Close beside me, upon a chair, lay a hunch of bread and a cup of milk. Surprised at these attentions on the part of my *host*, I looked about me all round the room; but I was alone. The Rump-in-the-Bowl had already begun, I suppose, to devote himself to his pernicious craft.

"More alarmed by this loneliness than by the actual presence of the robber, I wanted to get up and dress myself: but in vain I looked about for my miserable tatters, torn almost to ribbons in the scuffle overnight,—they were gone: but instead of them I saw at the foot of the bed, a pair of pantaloons, a waistcoat, a cloth frock-coat,—all entirely new,—together with an excellent pair of shoes. This exchange, though so profitable to me, threw me into despair; for, within the pocket of my working jacket, I had hitherto most carefully preserved the pocket-book extracted from the tomb of Regina's mother.

"But a moment after, to my great delight, I perceived the pocket-book—open, it is true—upon a table near the bed: I snatched it up, both eagerly and anxiously. Luckily, I found it contained every thing I knew to be there. I counted the number of letters,—not one was missing: the cross and the slip of parchment with the royal crown, were likewise safe as before I lay down. My satisfaction at this discovery was very great indeed, and my heart was lighter than usual when I had concluded this search.

"But soon after I was seized with a new alarm. That pocket-book, stolen by myself, and in a manner snatched out of the hands of the Rump-in-the-Bowl, eight years before, when I stunned him with repeated blows with the spade, just as he had violated the grave;—that pocket-book might have been remembered by the robber. Did he, then, suspect in what way it had come into my possession? and if so, would he seek to be revenged upon me?

"My situation was growing more and more critical. I durst not call out,—I felt an invincible objection to dress myself in the clothes laid on my bed, for the garments had unquestionably been stolen. And yet what could I do? The bare thought of staying in that house was terrible. I looked about once more for my rags; but it was to no purpose. The room contained a collection of the most heterogeneous articles:—silk curtains, ornamental clocks, boots and shoes, pieces of stuffs, suits of new wearing apparel, ladies' shawls, ancient armour, bundles of silk stockings, bottles of wine and spirits closely sealed, statuettes in ivory and bronze, of the finest workmanship, all kinds of linen goods, and a vast quantity of boxes of cigars, with labels in the Spanish language;—all these things being heaped together without any order. This hasty inventory increased my perplexity; for these articles could only be the produce and booty of numerous robberies, in which the malefactor was either an accomplice or the receiver. I resolved, at all hazards, to leave the house,—even with the borrowed clothes. But, unfortunately, the door was very strong, and double-locked into the bargain.

"Just then, I heard the door at the end of the gallery pushed open;—heavy steps drew near, and somebody tapped at the door in a strange and particular manner.

"I continued silent, and stirred not.

"Again the same tap was repeated; and then, after a few minutes' waiting, I observed a slight scraping beneath the foot of the door, and a scrap of paper was pushed into the chamber on the tip of the long keen blade of a knife; when again the sound of steps was heard departing, an dthe outer door was closed behind the visitor.

"I glanced at the paper which had just been thrust into the room. It was folded in two;—I picked it up and opened it, and read the few following words written in pencil, in the same orthography as is here preserved:—

"'*Tumoro*—1 *o'clock after nune—hits reddy.*'

"After hesitating for a moment, I laid down the paper near the sill of the door: it was evidently some criminal appointment from his pals.

"This last incident strengthened my determination to escape from that house.

"In order to be prepared for whatever might happen, I attired myself in spite of my disgust, in the clothes which did not belong to me; and then, putting aside the bundles, before it, I opened the window. It looked into a yard, and was nearly

thirty feet above the ground: escape, therefore, by that issue was impracticable.

"After reflecting a while, I came to a violent resolution: as soon as the Rump-in-the-Bowl should open the door, I would spring upon him; and, in spite of the racking pains which I still suffered, I could depend upon my courage and agility to make my way out of that chamber either with or without leave.

"At that moment new steps were heard in the gallery: I took heart, and stood ready to spring forward as soon as the Rump-in-the-Bowl should open the door. But how great was my surprise, when I heard a well-known voice sing the old air—

"'*The fair Bourbonnaise,*
Her heart as hot as live-coal.'

"It was the voice of La Levrasse; and the mountebank was singing his old favourite air.

"In the midst of his song, he knocked at the door, exactly in the same manner as the first visitor, before he slipped the note under the door.

"On receiving no answer, La Levrasse broke off his song and knocked again, and then a third time with more impatience; after which, probably convinced that the malefactor was gone abroad, my former master went away, humming his favourite tune.

"This unexpected meeting astounded me; but I did not wonder at all at the connexion existing between La Levrasse and the Rump-in-the-Bowl—two rascals so well fitted for each other. The aversion I conceived for the old impostor, the tyrant of my infant days, escaped by some unknown event from the fire kindled by Bamboche, was another reason to urge me to quit the house, as I feared every moment to see the police come down upon the place; in which case, in spite of my innocence, and my earnest protestations, I should be sure, in the opinion of the most unprejudiced, to pass for an accomplice of the Rump-in-the-Bowl, and be sent to prison as a thief, with full leisure to assert and prove my innocence on my trial. And this was a prospect which appeared to me far more fearful than to be committed to gaol as a houseless vagrant.

"More than ever determined to force my way out, I took up, hap-hazard, among the pile of old armour a sort of iron mace, not so much with the intention of striking the bandit, as to terrify him in case he should threaten or resist me.

"I was still stooping, therefore, over the heap of armour to take up the iron mace, when a hand was laid upon my shoulder. I started so quickly that, as I faced about, the mace fell from my grasp. I, was nearly opposite the door,—so I was quite certain that nobody had entered that way.

"I saw the Rump-in-the-Bowl standing erect behind me. He had just that instant come in, not by the door leading into the gallery, but through some opening in the wainscot, which I did not suspect to exist: so the robber's dwelling had two egresses to it.

"Thus, my intended escape by main force through the open door fell to the ground

"'This is something like,' said the malefactor to me, surveying my apparel; 'now, your are dressed out like a lord.'

"After a moment's pause, I answered—

"'Won't you return me the clothes I wore last night?'

"'Perhaps you think you lose by the change?'

"'Yes,—because these clothes have probably been stolen, like every other article in this room.'

"'Have you breakfasted?' said the ruffian, looking on the chair: 'no!—come, eat a mouthful, and then we'll have some talk. I have lit you a good fire, and got your breakfast ready:—Bamboche could not have treated you better.'

"'Once for all, I beseech you to return me my clothes, and to let me out—freely.'

"Instead of answering me, the malefactor stooped, picked up the note—read it—tore it up, and said to me—

"'I knew about this: I met my pal returning home. Have you read the note?'

"'I tell you to give me my clothes, for I am resolved to leave this place.'

"'Be patient, and attend to me;—this is the offer I meant to make you:—I will settle you in two nice natty rooms, genteelly furnished—you are decently clad as it is.—I will set you up in the most complete manner:—a tavern-keeper shall send in your meals every day. I won't allow you any pocket-money at first; but, by-and-by, if you behave well, you shall have plenty, I warrant you, and no mistake.'

"'And in requital of these benefits,' said I to the bandit, with a bitter smile, 'what do you expect me to do?'

"'You will give me up three hours of your time every day—nothing more: the remainder of your time shall be at your own disposal—to gad about, and do as you please.'

"'But what employment is it you would apply me to?'

"'I have told you already I wanted a *clerk*:—you shall be my clerk.'

"'Your clerk?"

"'Attend to me; and let us show our cards. For upwards of a week I have been to the wharf and elsewhere, to look for somebody that would suit me; but it was no go. All those faces would have set the police-hounds on the slip:—and then such manners! Now you, on the contrary, are just come up from the country,—you are not known, you look like an honest fellow; you are sharp enough in case of need, and you have good knuckles:—so you see, you fit me like a kid glove. 'What for?' says you: why this:—I am, as you perceive, overstocked with goods;—I have some *private reasons* for not selling them myself; but it is not through pride, though, I assure you! I want, therefore, to sell this thing,—to put that article into pawn, and to barter another, &c. &c. Now, to carry on such a business without raising suspicion, I must have a nice abode—be well thought of by the neighbours—live like a gentleman; and not being able to do all this in my own person, I am ready to make you my deputy, or clerk, and set you up comfortably to begin with. After a bit, you shall have a commission *on the sale*. What you see here is just nothing at all;—I have other ware-rooms, and——'

"'Ah! you want to employ my services to dispose of your thefts and larcenies.'

"'My goods, young man,—say my goods; that occupation to begin with.'

"'You have other functions, it would seem, in store for me?'

"'After a time you shall go into certain houses that I will tell you about, to offer samples of smuggled cigars, and under that pretence——'

"'Yes! under that pretence—well, go on.

"'Ah! ah! you begin to bite, I see: you pretended to disdain it, though. Well, under that pretence, you will do me some little services, of which more anon.'

"'Is that all you will require?'

"'For the moment, it is.'

"'Now, then, listen to me yourself. I know you, villain,—you are a base, ignominious wretch, of the vilest, the most abject character. In former times you were the ruin of Bamboche, and among many other crimes as yet unpunished, there was one terrible indeed!—you violated a grave.'

"'That pocket-book, no doubt, you mean? I had some notion of the thing,' exclaimed the robber, with a forced and savage smile. So, you know who it was baffled me in that business?'

"'I do;—it was myself.'

"'You?'

"'Yes—I. Then I was a child. I tell you this,

that you may see I am not afraid of you; for if, when only a child, I nearly broke your head with a shovel, now that I am a man, I may very likely break it altogether with this mace: you understand?'

"'So it was you?' muttered the bandit: 'we'll talk of it hereafter.'

"'Whenever you like. In the meantime you sha'n't detain me here. I reject all your fine offers, and will starve ere I accept them.'

"'You will readily believe, my lad, that I have not brought you into my store-room without taking certain measures of security to bind your faith:—at this very hour you are as fully committed as myself. The clothes you have on have been stolen: you came here and slept of your own accord,—you have breakfasted in my company of your own accord; and all this I am able to prove: so that, to accuse me would be to denounce yourself. As for earning a livelihood on the wharf, I defy you to do it; for now that I have declared you to be a spy, they would knock you on the head, and the next drubbing might finish you. Don't hope to call in the police—for you would be arrested yourself as a vagrant, and, in the course of two hours afterwards, I promise you they should find out that the clothes on your back had been stolen.'

"Here the Rump-in-the-Bowl paused a moment, and then inquired—

"'What do you say to that, my worthy?'

"'You are a scoundrel,' I exclaimed.

"The ruffian merely shrugged his shoulders.

"'A scoundrel!' he repeated. 'Why am I a scoundrel? Let us look at the matter. Yesterday morning you were starving, and I gave you some bread to eat: last night you were almost frozen to death,—I gave you shelter. You were covered with rags,—I have clad you decently from head to foot. *Where are your respectable people who would have done as much for you?*'

"'But what was your motive for assisting me? To lead me to crime?'

"'Of course,' resumed the robber; 'very true—it was so! But I should like to know *if your respectable people would give you as much to lead you to virtue.*'

"Notwithstanding the paradox that lurked in it, this strong and bold parallel confounded me:—I could not answer it.—Nay, I confess with shame and remorse, I forgot for a space that Claude Gerard, though very poor himself, had given me a home to allure me to good and make an honest man of me. But, at first, I was the more smitten with the robber's argument, because the step I had so recently taken by presenting myself before the magistrate,—the natural representative of LAW and ORDER immediately occurred to my mind. And what had that officer replied to me when I solicited employment? What encouragement had he given me to persevere in my resolution to lead an honest life? What prospect had he shown me as the result of my desperate situation?

"There was no denying it,—the bandit had come to my relief! He had taken me home,—he offered me for doing wrong a prospect of comfort, well-being and leisure. True, if I accepted his offer, I should run the risk of imprisonment; but misery and honesty were quite as certain to lead me to prison, according to the magistrate, since, for want of work or means to support myself, I should sooner or later be taken up as a vagrant.

"In both cases the result was the gaol.

"Now, was it not better to wait for that fatal day in comfort and all-enjoyment than in destitution and misery? Bamboche was right to uphold the logic of this malefactor; and experience shows me that my early comrade saw clearly into the case. This Rump-in-the-Bowl possesses the real science of life.

"The robber was watching me in silence: he guessed what his proposals and theory had partly shaken my resolution; so fearing, I suppose, to sacrifice, by too stubborn a course of tyranny, the advantage he flattered himself he had gained, he said—

"'After all, my lad, what is done under constraint is badly done:—I do n't wish to clap a pistol to your temple, and compel you to do my bidding. You are decently dressed,—this bread and milk will be enough for you to-day. Go out—try to earn your living honestly, as you call it; there are so many good, virtuous, respectable people to employ you and find you in bread, in order to save you from vice and crime. Still, if by some great chance, all these good, virtuous, and respectable people should treat you like a hungry dog that has gotten into a kitchen, come back to me to-morrow, and take the place of clerk which I offer you. Are you content?'

"I stood by thoughtful, sullen, and silent: the ruffian went on—

"'I need not tell you that I trust to your honesty not to sell the clothes you have on, and buy others not so good, to enable you to live on the difference. Now, to prove to you that what I say is in earnest,' added the malefactor, 'go forth if you like, for you are free.'

"And thereupon this sturdy Diogenes threw the chamber-door wide open.

CHAPTER V.

MARTIN TRIES ONCE MORE TO BE AN HONEST MAN, AND RECEIVES VERY LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT.

AS SOON as the door was open, my first impulse was to rush out. The Rump-in-the-Bowl did not at all prevent my departure; but just as I was turning from the gallery, he called after me—

"'Another word, my lad, for your sake.'

"I faced about.

"The malefactor was writing on a piece of paper.

"'There,' said he, 'is my address; for you do n't know the neighbourhood; and when you return to-night you must be able to inquire your way. If you return before me, wait for me in the gallery. So I wish you luck in your hunt after those good, kind gentles who pity and relieve the unfortunate.'

"I was again walking away.

"'I say!' cried the bandit.

"'What?'

"'Should you meet any such good, kind people, do n't forget to bring me one home, that I may see what he looks like:—I 'll have him stuffed.'

"Shrugging my shoulders, and without replying, I hurried down the stairs.

"When I got into the street, and no longer in the company of that ruffian, I felt as if I had awoke from a dream. I wondered how I could have suffered his odious paradoxes to distress me: then, likewise, I reproached myself bitterly for having forgotten, only for a moment, all that I owed to Claude Gerard. This fact,—was it not enough to throw down the snarling accusations heaped upon the good and orderly by the railing malefactor?

"Seeing myself decently attired—(I durst not consider the impure source from which I had derived those garments)—I felt more at ease. I felt my hopes revive,—the future looked less gloomy;—it seemed to me that at present my appeal to the charity of some benevolent person would be better received,—that I might attempt things now which before I could not have ventured to try; for the sight of a man covered with rags, raises suspicion and provokes disgust in the beholder.

"Consequently, I thought of presenting myself at

the house of the widow of my defunct protector. M. de Saint Stephen, whilst, in my former beggar's dress, shame would have prevented me; and if not, I never could have passed beyond the ante-chamber.

"Madame de Saint Stephen must by that time have partly recovered from the unforeseen shock which she had sustained: I hoped, therefore, that she would do something for me out of respect for her husband's memory: so I went to the Rue Mont Blanc.

"The porter* recollected me very well. But, alas! a new misfortune awaited me;—the lady was gone down, since the day which followed her husband's death, to her country seat, which was upwards of six hundred miles from Paris. To write to her, and await her answer, would take at least five or six days, and, circumstanced as I was, that was an age.

"'Listen to me!' said I to the porter, who appeared sincerely to pity me; 'this neighbourhood is inhabited by people who are very opulent; some few among them are no doubt generous and humane,—their names must be known to you. It is possible that they would pity me, when I shall have told them candidly the condition I am placed in, and all I have suffered since my arrival in Paris.'

"The *concierge* shook his head and replied—

"'There are many very rich people in this district; but the grand point is to make your way into their presence; and even then, in fine, all I can do for you is to give you the address of M. du Tertre, the eminent banker: they say he gives large sums in charity:—try your chance.'

"I went to the banker's.

"'Who do you want?' said the porter.

"'M. du Tertre, the banker.'

"'Go to the counting-house,—right-hand staircase—on the *entrisal*.*

"My ragged clothes would have caused me to be stopped at the door;—my suitable attire banished all suspicion. I went up, and entered an ante-chamber, where sat two receiving clerks.

"'M. du Tertre,' said I to one of them.

"'If, sir, you wish to speak to the cashier, I will show you the way.'

"I was ushered into the cashier's private room; at the back of which was a spacious iron cupboard or safe, in which I caught sight of piles of silver and gold. Those riches did not excite my envy, but gave me pain.

"'I wished, sir,' said I to the cashier, 'to speak to M. du Tertre himself.'

"'On business, sir?'

"'No, sir,' said I, stammering and blushing to the forehead; 'it is not on business.'

"'Are you known to M. de Tertre?' inquired he, eyeing me with a distrustful look, which aggravated my perplexity.

"'No, sir,' I replied; 'but I wanted to see him—to speak to him.'

"'He is from home, sir,' returned the cashier, with increased suspicion; for his mature experience enabled him no doubt to anticipate my object. 'Have the goodness either to write to M. du Tertre, or else to acquaint me with your business with him.'

"'My business, sir,' replied I, mastering my confusion, 'is to appeal to his goodness—his known character for benevolence and charity.'

"The cashier did not allow me to proceed;—he replied with chilling politeness—

"'Certainly, sir, the charity of M. du Tertre is deservedly extolled: but he exercises it according to principles which he never swerves from. Have the kindness to leave me your name and address, and those of two respectable references, to whom you are known, and who will speak to your character; and specify, likewise, the nature of the assistance you wish to obtain from M. du Tertre; and in three days hence, you may call here again.'

"'Sir, listen to me, I beseech you;—my situation is deplorable—my necessities most urgent: I have not——'

"'Excuse me, sir,—my time is taken up,' answered he: 'have the goodness to step into the next room, the pay clerk will give you writing materials to state your case at leisure.'

"Then, as I still persisted to obtain a hearing, he stood up—rang the bell—conducted me most politely to the door, and said to one of the clerks—

"'Give this gentleman pen, ink, and paper.'

"'Thank you; I will write my letter at home, and send it,' said I to the youth, in despondence, and I retired with a very heavy heart.

"I have since learned that M. du Tertre was very charitable; but he distributed his alms without ever deviating from the rules which he had established in circulating his benefactions. In spite of my cruel disappointment, I was obliged to confess that the banker's careful behaviour was suggested by good, natural sense, and a praiseworthy desire to distribute

* The porter in a French house is a kind of servant, of which the poor untravelled cockney who has never seen any thing but the thin, quivering, egg-shell houses of London, can have no idea of. A Paris house differs as much from a London one, as Lincoln's Inn Fields differs from Gough Square; or as the Monument from one of the pepper-boxes which the jocose architect has placed on the top of our National Gallery. It is not unusual to find sixty, eighty, and even a hundred rooms in a Paris house. The porter, who generally inhabits a lodge adjacent to the street-gate, is the keeper or custodian of all these rooms for the landlords or the tenants, when they are either unlet or vacant, during the absence of the lodgers. He is, likewise, a general servant in the house, and makes the beds, sweeps and cleans out the rooms, goes of errands, or sends his wife out on them, and takes care of the key of your apartment, which he hangs up on a nail or hook with your number above it, when business calls you abroad. There is no class of men in Paris who bear a higher character for honesty and rigid morality than the porter. In poorer neighbourhoods, where the houses are smaller, and the gains more moderate, the porter annexes a trade to his domestic duties, and is either a tailor, like the father of Leonidas, the manfish in this novel, or a shoe-maker, like that lucky porter in the Rue Saint Honoré, at whose house the famous Maximilian Robespierre resided in 1793 and 1794. In a fit of caprice the dictator gave this poor man an order for some 80,000 pairs of shoes for the army, and enabled him afterwards to buy the house in which he had toiled and drudged for forty years as a servant. But the porters have one great defect,—they are too apt to speak of you and your affairs, unless you purchase their discretion; and their wives talk scandal by the hour. During the revolution, the Paris porters did more by their secret information to feed the guillotine, than any other class of men; and they were always the first persons applied to when some new decree had suddenly handed over a host of unfortunates to the axe. Terror would drive the condemned people from their own houses, where they had friends; and the shelter they sought in strange houses, remote from their own, exposed them to the sleepless vigilance of the porter, who considered it a virtue and a proof of good *citizenship* to denounce them. The account that is given of the porter *Alfred* and his wife, in the "Mysteries of Paris," is an admirable picture of low life, quite equal to the most happy sketches in Boz., and entirely free from that awkward caricature which disparages almost every character of our renowned fellow-countryman. The Paris porter has a variety of designations: he is sometimes called a *portier*, at others a *concierge*, and in the families of the great he is called a *suisse*, though he does not always come from Helvetia. The porter in large establishments has several dependants under him:—there is a *Commissionnaire* outside the house, at the corner of the street, to carry loads, and run on distant errands, and to black the boots and shoes of the inmates, who have no men-servants of their own. Occasionally, too, he patronises a little Savoyard at some adjacent street-post, who gets his living by removing the mud or the dust from your boots and clothes when out on your daily rounds. The *frotteur*, who waxes the floor of your apartment, and then rubs it over till it shines like new mahogany, is another subaltern under the direction of this efficient custodian.—*Translator's note.*

* The narrow range of apartments over the ground-floor in Paris houses is called the *entrisal:* it is all but universal in French houses, and is generally let with the shop, where there is one. The small pent-up first storeys over the piazza of the Quadrant exactly resemble a French *entrisal.*—*Translator's note.*

his charities among worthy objects. But in my case what address could I give? Who could I refer to as warranties of my character?

"But I did not yet despair. On leaving the banker's, the weather being fine, I went to the Tuileries, for this purpose—

"'I can readily believe,' thought I, 'that M. du Tertre wishes to bestow his money with due caution, and not to squander his beneficence; and, therefore, that before he bestows it, he makes his inquiries. Perhaps he does not make due allowance for imminent distress,—for those urgent cases which, like my own, are too critical;—and certainly had I been able to reach his presence, he would have yielded to the strength and sincerity of my intreaties. Well, I will speak to some one else;—I will go into a public walk, where the rich take their usual exercises;—I will select some person with a kind and benevolent aspect: to him will I apply for a moment's patient hearing in a secluded walk;—to him will I unfold my destitute situation, and I make sure I shall not be refused.'

"When I got to the Tuileries, I took up my position in the avenue of the Linden trees, running alongside of the Rue de Rivoli, soon after which, I saw, stepping from a carriage, a gentleman, who was still young, and whose countenance was mild and inclining to melancholy. He began to walk up and down the avenue at a slow pace. I followed him close behind; but at the first turning my courage failed me, and I was too timid to speak. I said to myself, as an excuse,—'I must look at him again, and see if my first impression was correct.' I slackened my step,—he turned about, and walked towards me; it was the same mild, sad, and thoughtful countenance: 'I won't hesitate any more,' thought I; 'I feel my confidence revive.' But no—again my resolution died away, and sought refuge in another pretext. Several persons were between him and me; besides, the avenue appeared more solitary at the other end.

"Meanwhile, as I walked along, regulating my steps by those of my intended benefactor, I looked about for some other faces still more encouraging than his;—but without effect. There still remained but a few yards to reach the extremity of the walk, and I was left alone this time with the man on whom my last hopes rested. I armed myself with a firm resolve,—quickened my step,—and going straight up to him, without his seeming to see me, I stammered out in a tremulous, stifled voice—

"'S—s—s—ir!'

"Whether it was that fear and embarrassment had made me unintelligible, or that my intended benefactor was too deeply absorbed, he did not hear me, and passed slowly on to the top of the avenue. Blushing this time at my weakness, I struggled with all my might to gain heart, and meeting him face to face the moment he turned round, I bowed to him, and said in a low, faint voice—

"'Sir.'

"'Sir,' replied he, stopping short, and staring at me with astonishment.

"Then, as I stood silent and confounded, he continued—

"'Sir,—you are apparently mistaken; I have not the honour of your acquaintance.'

"Staggered by these words, my resolution gave way: I felt that it was impossible for me to relate there, in the middle of that walk, the principal events in my life to a stranger, and to lay a stress on those more pointed circumstances, without which I could not be distinguished from a common beggar. Terrified, therefore, at the attempt I had made, I answered with a stutter—

"'No, sir,—I have not the honour to be known to you; but I wanted—I fain did hope——'

"Not another word could I have uttered for worlds: my throat became contracted,—I stood silent—stiff—unable to move,—with my hat in my hand, not daring to raise my eyes to the stranger; who, more than ever astonished, said to me in a hasty and louder tone—

"'Once for all, sir,—what do you want with me?—why did you stop me in the middle of this walk?'

"On hearing this speech, uttered in a raised voice, two or three persons faced about, and stood to look at me. Up to that time I had remained with my hat off, and my head stooping: but now, at length, perceiving that my attitude and silent embarrassment added to the very natural astonishment of the stranger, and began to attract the notice of the throng, among whom I descried one of the keepers of the park, I slank away, saying in a broken voice—

"'Excuse me, sir,—I thought—I mistook you for some one else.'

"I did not, however, give up all hope yet. I went out of the garden and came up to a church: I went into it, still hoping. When a person is praying, he must be charitably inclined; I shall be certain to meet with some compassionate soul in this place. A woman was leaving the church: there was a servant behind her in a rich livery, with a velvet bag adorned with a coat of arms in his hand. Just as the lady, whose aspect was venerable and full of sweetness, was passing along a kind of gallery erected outside the church, I went up to her and said in a hurried voice—

"'Madam, for heaven's sake, take pity on me; I am alone in Paris, without friends—without money—without resources of any kind:—I ask only for work that I may earn an honest livelihood.'

"'Do you belong to this parish, friend?' inquired the lady.

"'No, madam.'

"'Are you known to the curate of your parish? Will he answer for your faith, piety, and moral conduct?'

"'Alas! my good lady, I am houseless, forlorn, and have no parish.'

"'I am sorry for you,' answered the lady; 'but as it is unfortunately out of my power to relieve every body, I am obliged to reserve my charitable donations for the poor of my own parish, who attend strictly to their religious duties.'

"Having so said, she went on out of the temple.

* * * * *

"When, that night, towards ten o'clock, exhausted with want, I returned to the Rump-in-the-Bowl's dwelling, a sudden resolution had occurred within me: my soul was steeped in gall and distrust: instead of my usual placidity and contentment,—a rebellious hatred was gnawing at my heart. After so many fruitless endeavours to be honest, and emerge from my distress without breaking the laws, the ideas of right and wrong, of good and evil, began to lose all distinction in my mind: I likewise began to divide practice from theory, in respect to honour.

"I was tired, above all:—tired of suffering,—tired of hoping in vain,—tired of dreading the future;—tired of saying inwardly—'shall I not die to-morrow of hunger and cold!'

"So I returned to the malefactor, who was at home, expecting me.

"'It's no go,' said he, laughing outright; 'you haven't brought me back the most tiny, little, good, benevolent man to let me stuff him.'

"'I am ready to become your clerk,' said I to him with sullen resolution.

"'To-morrow?'

"'Yes,—to-morrow.'

"'Capital, my lad! This is the tack we go upon,—I reckoned on your return, and this very day have pitched upon a tenant whose time was up, and have taken a ready-furnished apartment, and have bought the sticks at a fair price. To-morrow I will take you to see it. You will tell the people that it suits you,—you will sign the lease; and then I will set-

tle with the tavern-keeper to send in your meals. You shall want for nothing;—only to give you your cue, and as a warrant to myself, you shall go to-morrow and pledge a watch at the Mont-de Piété;* the day after to-morrow you shall have as a holiday, and after that we will commence our operations.'

"'Very well,' said I; 'but I am hungry and sleepy.'

"'Supper is ready: here are some vivens, which are more palatable than bread and milk. There is a good mattress to lie down upon. To-night I shall take back my bed, young man, for my age requires it.'

"'Have you no wine?' said I to him; for I felt that I wanted to dull my excited brain.

"'I like that,—for now you speak like a plucky fellow:—I have a prime sample of Madeira,—taste it, my boy.'

"I ate and drank, above all, with avidity; and so little was I accustomed to drink wine, that I went to bed, if not drunk, at least completely besotted, for my recollections as to that evening are quite gone—faded away from my memory.

"The next morning, when I awoke, I found the bandit had risen, and was dressed.

"'The appointment with the landlord,' said he, 'is fixed for eleven o'clock; it is already ten,—dress yourself, and let us be off.'

"I dressed, and we sallied forth.

"Just as we left the house, the malefactor said to me—

"'*Here, take the watch.*'

"Saying which, he offered me a very fine gold watch, and chain to match.

"'I will take it when we reach the Mont-de-Piété; that will be time enough,' returned I.

"'As you please:—let us first go and see the apartment, and sign the lease. Say,—don't you consider me a very clever man of business?'

"'Excellent.'

"We arrived at the Faubourg Montmartre, and went into a neat, respectable house: we were shown up to the apartments, which consisted of three small rooms, looking over a yard, and very nicely furnished.

"'You will be as happy here as a king,' said the Rump-in-the-Bowl; 'and more comfortable, I think, than lying in the snow or slosh of Paris, during the night, eh?'

"'Far more comfortable.'

"'Let us go down to the landlord and sign the lease, and pay the first quarter's rent in advance;—here 's two hundred francs.'

"Thereupon, the bandit delivered to me ten pieces of gold.

"The landlord was waiting for us: the lease was ready made out, the malefactor having previously had an understanding with the upholsterer who was instructed to sell the furniture,—that tradesman had apprised the landlord of the settlement; so nothing remained but to pay the rent: I therefore told down two hundred francs, and a duplicate copy of the lease was handed to me.

"'We have just transacted a capital affair,' said my companion to me, as we were issuing from the house; 'to *obtain* goods, is nothing at all; but to sell them—and sell them without suspicion, that 's the *rub;* and what can be more natural than for a young fellow in good circumstances, and known and respected by his neighbours, to dispose one day of a few trinkets, another day of some plate, linen or stuffs of any kind, taking especial care to choose his customers, to-day in one street, to-morrow in another half a mile off, and who is able to give a respectable address where his customer comes to pay him. Why that removes even the shadow of suspicion; and then, do you see? these first steps are mere trifles, the *door-way* to the house—but *by-and-bye*, my young cove, you shall learn to know *all the benefit* that is to be acquired by *your establishment* in this neighbourhood.'

"'I make no doubt of it I shall; but now where are we going to?'

"'To the Mont-de-Piété: you must ask twenty pounds for the watch and chain, and they will offer you three hundred francs, which you may take.'

"'Very good.'

"'Take the watch, then.'

"'By-and-bye.'

"'As you please.'

* The great pawnbroker's establishment in Paris, and, if we remember rightly, under the control of government.—*Translator's note.*

CHAPTER VI.

HOW YOUNG MARTIN ESCAPES FROM THE MALEFACTOR, AND MEETS WITH A FRIEND JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME.

"I FELT myself in that state of mind which one may compare to a man in a dream, and who yet has a vague consciousness that he is dreaming; but still I experienced no sense of remorse; I firmly believed myself to be excusable, and amidst the deep feelings of hatred and resentment which at that moment rankled in my heart against mankind, I said to myself—

"'I persisted to the last to implore them for bread and work, but they turned a deaf ear to my prayers; they have compelled me either to starve or do some misdeed; let my infamy recoil on that society which like a stepmother has turned me adrift: it disallows *my right to live*—I disallow its laws.'

"Doubtless my companion read in my face the corrosive venom of my thoughts, for he said to me gaily—

"'That 's how I like to observe you, my boy: you look pale—your teeth are set close: now am I sure that with a good clasp-knife in your grip, you would not turn away from a dozen people.'

"The malefactor had just uttered this characteristic speech, when we were obliged to stop in the midst of a cluster of people owing to some obstruction of the road occasioned by carriages; the corner of the street thus obstructed kept back the pedestrians: I had stopped on the edge of the pavement; suddenly I uttered an involuntary cry. A few yards off—I perceived the beautiful vision of Regina in one of the carriages impeded by the gathering.

"The lovely girl was dressed in black, as I had always beheld her on the anniversaries of her mother's death, a slight pallor overspread her fine pensive countance; she appeared thoughtful.

"It chanced that she turned her head about in my direction—for a moment only her sad and vacant glance fell listlessly upon me.

"My eyes met her own—without her appearing to be aware of it.

"Precisely then, the passage becoming open, the carriage in which she was sitting with another lady rolled on, and I saw it no more.

"That single glance of Regina's was electrical; a divine spark kindled and lighted up for a moment the abyss at my feet. My resolution was instantly taken.

"I was separated from the Rump-in-the-Bowl by a number of people who had been stopped by the hindrance like ourselves; on my left, I saw an open street-gate, and beneath its roof the lower steps of a staircase; availing myself of my companion's inattention, for he was just then looking another way, I sprang in under the shed without being noticed by the porter, hastened up the staircase to the first floor, and then continued more slowly and leisurely to ascend to the fifth storey; and ready to cite the name of some apocryphal

tenant should any one inquire what brought me to the house.

"My object was to leave the malefactor time enough to run to look for me at either end of the street. I halted therefore on the landing of the fifth storey, and after awhile came down again very tardily, making a stop on each successive landing-place; by this means I won about a quarter of an hour, after which I stole back into the street, looking cautiously both to the right and to the left before I left the shelter of my hiding-place.

"The Rump-in-the-Bowl was no longer to be seen.

"Plunging into the passage forming the Cité Bergere, I sped along, and taking the most lonely streets in that quarter, I at length reached some spacious grounds lined on one side by the remotest houses of the suburbs, and on the other by the outward wall which encircles the capital.

"There at length I was able to draw breath: I was free again.

"During my hurried course I had matured my resolution. I felt calm and composed.

"Glancing around me, I descried, skirting the last straggling houses of the suburb, a number of deep hollow pits, probably the effects of buildings which had been suspended by the cold season; a palisade of thin planks had been put up, and almost entirely enclosed these buildings. Among them there was one which hardly peered above the foundation; I remarked in it a cellar half completed, and offering to view a deep retreating shed. *Now Providence was serving me to my wish.* I longed most ardently for the night to come; the light of day was hateful to my eyes.*

"I sauntered for several hours among these lonely grounds; at last a dusky fog covered them with its thick vapour.

"The more I thought of the matter, the more my resolution appeared to me to be sound and rational, and the more likewise did I wonder at the terrible dizziness which had before seized upon me, and from which *the sight of Regina had rescued me.*

"Night fell at last.

"I had no difficulty in opening a hole through the boarding which surrounded the unfinished buildings. *I went down into the pits and made myself a litter with some straw, set down a stone to lay my head upon, and then stretched my body on the ground, and patiently waited for death.*

"You know it, O my God! I embraced this last final resolution without hatred, anger, or rebellion against fate. *These resentful feelings had all, with my criminal designs, vanished at a single glance from Regina's eye.*

"No, I resolved to die simply because I could not meet with the means of living.

"Because I was unwilling to live at the price of my dishonour, as at first I had thought of doing.

"Because, in fine, I felt neither the courage nor the will, nor the strength that was necessary to prolong the painful struggle which I had maintained for three days with my dire distress.

"I was not killing myself; I did not hurl one last wild and savage anathema at a pitiless world: no, no, you know it, my God! . . . Resigned, and full of mercy and forgiveness, I accepted, I yielded to the *physical impossibility* of living—as a man submits to a mortal disease.

"This disease was poverty—it was bringing death to me—but I did not kill myself.

"From that evening I was a prey to a species of moral and physical agony, but certainly far less painful than I had foreseen.

"The temperature of that dark humid cellar was nearly luke-warm; when after spending the first night in a torpor both of mind and body, I saw the pale glimmer of dawn through the roof of my lurking-place, I felt rejoiced as I inwardly thought: *I shall not go out to-day.* I shall have no need to trouble myself either for food or shelter.

"I spent that second day in a state of utter stillness, which brought on, *as I had expected, a cold and painful numbness;* with *my face turned towards the wall* of the cellar, *and my eyes closed,* I was absorbed in the recollection of the past.*

"This long meditation fell like a solemn and tender adieu, arising from the depths of my heart, and which I was bidding to those I loved best.

"Bamboche—Basquine—Claude Gerard—Regina were alternately evoked by my sinking spirit; for, on the evening of that second day, I began to feel the acute strains of famine; but happily they soon began to affect my brain, already almost spent.

"From that time I must have fallen a prey to the hallucinations which ever accompany that dreadful paroxysm—*the ravings of hunger;* and then I lost all consciousness of what befel me.

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"When I recovered myself it was still dark, and I was lying on a horse-bed, in a kind of loft, beneath which I saw a long stable, containing about thirty or forty horses.

"I thought I was dreaming; I looked about me with increasing bewilderment, when I heard somebody climbing the ladder leading from the stable below to the loft above, and in spite of my weakness, in spite of the dizziness which I still suffered, I recollected at once the kind, bonny face of the hackney-coachman who had driven me to and fro the first day of my arrival in Paris.

"'Ah, at last! then your eyes are opened,' cried he delighted. 'The doctor said you had no illness but hunger—and so too it appeared; for when we had given you a little thin broth to drink, you looked better immediately.'

"'How did I come here?' I inquired with emotion: 'it was thanks to you no doubt, honest fellow?'

"'Rather; and I am proud to avow it, my lad; but I will tell you the whole story at once, to prevent you from thinking and worrying yourself, for if you make your head ache, it would do you no good. So this is how it was. Yesterday, after dinner, a pretty little lady, with her veil down, and her nose too, you understand, came to me and beckoned for me to open my coach, and then, nimble as a kitten, leapt in, and pulled up the window, saying to me: 'Coachman! go to the barrier of the Etoile! and when you enter the road to Neuilly, go gently on.' Clear as light, that, my loves. So I got upon my box, reached the road to Neuilly, and slackened pace. Five minutes later, the little lady pulled me and shook me with all her might by the collar of my great coat, crying out: 'Stop, stop, coachman, if you please, and open the door.' I got down, and let in—whom, pray? a fine young gentleman, who got in, saying: 'Coachman, drive round to the Faubourg Montmartre, close to the barrier; you will let us down at the unfinished houses.' So I whipped my horses; it was a famous long drive that, as you must know, and something like yours from the Rue Mont Blanc to the blind alley. When we came to the grounds near the barrier, my two turtles alighted as gay as

*The ludicrous allusion just now to the electric glance from Regina's eyes, this scandalous misuse of the word Providence, and indeed the whole of this chapter until Martin revives from his self-inflicted but partial starvation, disgusts me beyond measure; and I take this opportunity of requesting the reader to believe that the alloy which he will sometimes discover in this and other writings of this able advocate of the poor and industrious classes, is fully as distasteful to me as to himself.—*Translator's note.*

*If this is not suicide, with philosophy to back it, I should like to know what is.—*Translator's note.*

larks; the young spark paid me like a prince. I was then returning without a fare, when I spied a little crowd, and leaned over that way. 'What now?' said I; 'what is it?' 'They have found a man in the buildings almost dead with hunger,' replied one. That made my heart ache: I stretched my head out, and what should I see but you, my poor lad! My country customer. I exclaimed: 'I don't wonder at it.' Well, 'faith, I did n't stop to think; we were close to the stables. So I got down, and saw you had fainted; I told them I knew you: I packed you up in my coach, brought you here, and sent for the doctor. He came and told us that you were dying of hunger, and that we must give you a few spoonfuls at a time of some thin broth; we followed the prescription, and I hope that by and by, you will take your broth by the plateful instead of by the spoonful, and some good wine along with it.'

"Then, as I began to express my heartfelt gratitude to the excellent fellow, he continued:

"'Stop a bit—it never rains but it pours: one good news follows another; the *glazed hats* are good fellows in their way, and this is what we said to each other:—'Mike, the stable-boy, has lately left us; now, if this poor young man likes it, he can take Mike's place for the present: there's nothing much to do. He shall sleep in the loft—as Mike used to do; he can take care of our horses at night and give them their water in the morning, for which we will allow him fifteen pence a day; certainly, my poor lad,' replied my preserver, 'this is no great things for you who came to fill a good place in Paris; but still it is bread to eat, and when we have secured that, we can all of us wait for better times—that's the whole story. If you will accept of Mike's place it's a settled thing: you shall enter upon it as soon as you get well; for the doctor said we must give you time and take care of you. So do n't bother yourself: we are twenty of us here, and by clubbing each a penny a day we shall be able to feed you like a nabob till you get upon your legs again.'

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"God be praised, the time of my severest trials was over; I need not say with what gratitude I accepted from those worthy people the unexpected succour which they offered me; in a few days I was thoroughly restored to health. So fully taught by experience and by the noble maxims of Claude Gerard, I faithfully performed, without any sense of shame or humiliation, the duty to which I owed my bread.

"In the course of six weeks afterwards, the coachman—my new patron and protector, said to me:

"'My lad, I have a brother-in-law who is a porter in the Rue de Provençe, at a furnished hotel; there stands a capital corner *(coin de rue)* for a messenger who is active, and intelligent, and above all, who can read and write like yourself; my brother-in-law has promised to get you the custom of the hotel: that is, to run of errands, carry parcels or luggage in and out, and help to clean the boots and shoes of the lodgers, &c.; the place is worth about three francs a day; should you prefer that to being a stable-boy? If so, we will go to the *préfecture*, with my brother-in-law as your witness, in order to get you your *badge;* even this place is not yet quite the thing I could wish for you, but the work will be more easy than here: you will still have bread to eat—and more of it, and better times will come by and bye.'

"I accepted the hearty good fellow's offer the more willingly that, in spite of all my zealous attention and punctuality, my connexion with so many masters sometimes exposed me to coarse and savage behaviour, which was hard to endure; but this be said without lessening at all the sincere and profound gratitude which I must ever feel for them in return for the assistance they rendered me in the most cruel situation in which I was ever placed."

CHAPTER VII.

MARTIN ADDRESSES A FEW PENITENT REFLECTIONS TO HIS FRIEND, THE KING.

"PERMIT me, Sire, to say a few words in this place, on account of the preceding events.

"You have seen the frightful—the ruinous consequences of *turning to account* young children by a set of immoral and vagrant mountebanks.

"Almost every day the French press brings cases to light to confirm those which I have witnessed, and in many of which I have been an actor, or tool. And yet the world tolerates these enormities with selfish disregard, as the children of the poor are the only sufferers by them.

"Bitter derision. Laws exist, (true they are not enforced), the object of which is, at least, praiseworthy, since it tends to direct the employment of children in our great factories; why does not this law extend its protection to those wretched children who are turned to base accounts by unnatural parents, or by degraded showmen? for such employment depraves and likewise degrades those unfortunate little creatures, and not only exposes them afterwards to theft or prostitution, but absolutely forms and educates them for those crimes.

"The recital of the few years I passed with Claude Gerard has shown your Majesty how those who govern France have understood — and still understand the education of the people who inhabit the country and not the town, and who constitute the huge majority of the nation; you have seen, Sire, what are the *comforts*, the *respect*, and the *honours* they bestow upon the *schoolmaster*.

Suppose there be a solemn and a public ceremonial—who is seen in the first rank? The magistrate, who holds in his hand the sword of justice,—the general, who carries that of the army,—and the priest who displays the sword of religious faith. These three functionaries present in their persons the sad symbols of *human and divine punishment* in this world and the next.

"But among these pompous processions, in the same rank as those who judge, punish, or repress, why do we never behold that man no less serviceable to society than the magistrate, the soldier, or the priest?—that man who ought certainly to be honoured at any rate as their equal, —I mean the *public instructor?*

"Yes, the *public instructor!* he who must morally create the citizen, — teach him, better him, and inspire in his soul the ardent and sacred love of his country and mankind, prepare him to understand and fulfil his duties, and to sustain those painful trials which belong to a life of honesty and toil.

"What! the schoolmaster who practises the noblest of all charges, who enlightens, who moralises the people, is he to be deemed an unequal match for those who, when the people err, *judge, butcher,* or *condemn* them?

"Your Majesty has seen by the attestation of these official documents recently cited, for what despicable object the governing minds of this country and their accomplices, have degraded the public instructor to the most abject and loathsome condition.

"Another incident in my life has exposed to your view a monstrous fact, which ought to be considered, in every State which pretends to be civilized, as a rare and terrible phenomenon, and yet that fact is so frequent, that all generous hearts groan to think of it, though they can no longer wonder at its existence.

"In order to resolve, Sire, this gloomy and foreboding problem, we must thus lay it down:

"Imagine a young man, in good health, robust, honest, and intelligent, who has had a primary education, who knows a handicraft—who is very willing, patient, and not averse to any work whatever—who will take to any employment—who is accustomed to labour, to hard living—who can live cheerfully on small wages—in fine who requires only to earn his bread and shelter.

"'That man with his resolute spirit, his complete self-denial, his capacity for labour, is he, let me ask, certain to earn his *bread and shelter* honestly?

"Will the world acknowledge his *right to labour* —that is his right to live in exchange for his honesty and toil?

"The last incident of my life, Sire, which you have just perused, has determined that question.

"I know that certain serious people, your political economists for instance, will reply:

"Good and honest workmen are too scarce for a man who is willing, intelligent, and capable, not to find indubitably a fit occupation—*sooner or later.*

"Yes—*sooner or later.* That is the very rub, Sire.

"*Sooner or later?*

"To be entirely without means of living, and then to find—safe employment within two or three days. That is *soon*—so *soon*, that it requires something like a miracle to bring it about. I appeal to those who, like me, have ever experienced a state of things so desperate.

"Well, Sire, for a man in want of every thing, and who will neither beg nor steal—to find employment of any kind after waiting two days, is already very late, because few human beings can endure hunger above two days.

"To find employment after a suspense of three days will be *too late,* for by that time he *would be dying.*

"'And yet two or three days is so little time—it is so soon gone!' say the rich and happy.

"Again others would remark:

"'People who are dead, or dying of hunger, are sometimes found, it is true, but very seldom.'

"Is it not monstrous already that in the midst of a society, many of whom are gorged with superfluous wealth, a single one of God's creatures can die for want of bread? Still these deaths are not frequent. Why so?

"Because the greater number of those who, like myself, have known the atrocious grief of offering in vain his hands, his mind, his endeavours, in return for any employment, do not hesitate to choose the alternative:

"*To die of hunger, virtuous and innocent.*

"Or:

"*To live at the cost* of dishonour, of vice, and crime.

"And that is the reason the hulks are crowded with convicts; that is the reason the deaths by starvation are so unusual.

"But what is the remedy to all this?—to give alms? No! for charity is powerless, and degrades the receiver.

"But we must admit and establish this principle:

"*Society is bound to secure to every one of its members, education, employment, and bread.*

CHAPTER VIII.

YOUNG MARTIN IN HIS NEW OFFICE OF MESSENGER, OR TICKET-PORTER AT THE HOTEL, MEETS WITH THE CRAB, A VERY PROMISING YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

"WITHOUT holding a fixed and steadfast situation, I now lived on from day to day for several months rescued from the hateful and abominable contact by which I had formerly been polluted. Thanks to the protection of my friend the hackney-coachman, I was now a messenger or ticket-porter at the gate of a furnished hotel in the Rue de Provence; I had, to my great astonishment received no answer from Claude Gerard, though I had written to him several times; and the widow of M. de Saint Stephen had preserved the same silence.

"Ticket-porters who can read and write being rare, I naturally had the preference over my brethren on several occasions, which envied preference I was obliged to sustain with my fist against my unlettered competitors. Fortunately I was nimble and robust, and had the better in these conflicts.

"Thus I went on from day to day deriving a secret pleasure from the speculations which my open situation enabled me to make on the different persons who employed me, or to whom my frequent messages introduced me. I sought to penetrate into their tastes, their passions, their feelings, by observing the most minute circumstances; and my observations were rendered still easier by the fact that my mean condition prevented all diffidence, and many words which were thought to be above the reach of my understanding were dropped in my presence, which threw a light upon new mysteries, and showed the way to fresh discoveries.

"I had been about a month employed, every day, and nearly all day, by a young man who occupied a small apartment in the hotel of the Rue de Provence, at the gate of which I usually stood.

"His name was Balthazar Roger, and he was the very same *crab* who had so cruelly worried poor Leonidas Shark, afterwards reduced to the condition of a *Man-fish*. Balthazar Roger, whose name now possesses a European fame, was then only known to a few friends, admirers of his works. That young poet had an excellent heart, a most sprightly humour, and the most inventive genius. He was ugly, but his ugliness was so good tempered, so lively, so joyous; he laughed so heartily and spontaneously at his funny nonsense, and was so ingeniously duped by his own bouncing and harmless extravagances that his ugliness was soon forgotten, in favour of his spirit and good temper.

"In spite of this jovial disposition, this sprightly fancy, Balthazar's poetry was dark, passionate, and wild, for the young poet was at that time affected by the prevailing taste for the fantastical and gloomy.

"The messages which Balthazar sent me to deliver were long, repeated, and endless; for their object was to treat for and dispose of his writings, at that period disdained, and which now so justly and deservedly are contended for. The booksellers were inflexible. After wandering to every part of Paris, I had to return with woful looks to Balthazar with the cloth-bag containing his manuscripts.

"In spite of these denials and disappointments his composure and jocularity would have done honour to a hero: I never saw a more noble, a more striking example of the consolation, the hopefulness, the serenity of mind which may be found in labour and study:—study!, that gentle mother *(alma mater)!* He was poor,—sometimes reduced so low as to suffer the most cruel privations; but never once did his trust in the future abandon him,—never did he doubt the magnificent harvest he should reap by his talents. It was not pride; but foresight and the consciousness of his worth; for, as the great Alfred used to say, *a man knows the stature of his own mind as well as he does the stature of his own body.* Consequently, whilst his eyes were fixed upon that bright hereafter, he would often indulge in splendid but premature dreams, and it was no easy task at such a time to rouse him from the contemplation of those visions.

"One morning he said to me, when delivering his precious bag with several rolls of paper in it,—

"'Martin, you have there—1st. *A Bruised Heart;* 2nd. *The Smiles of Satan;* 3rd. *The Jokes of a Man on the Gallows.* Each of these manuscripts is directed to a different bookseller. Now mind, I expressly forbid you to let go of either of these manuscripts for less than the sum of 4000 francs,—total, 12,000 francs for the three works. But, above all, Martin, above all, mind you—taking nothing but gold, you understand? nothing but gold as I have settled with my booksellers. No bank notes, no silver, but gold only—you understand?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Here is a small box in which you can stow the 600 pieces of gold—here is the key; put the box in the bag, and look sharp, Martin. There are plenty of rogues abroad—they will come about you, and you must beware of them; the rascals can smell gold a mile off.'

"'Do n't be uneasy, sir, I will be very careful.'

"Balthazar Roger gave me his orders with so much earnestness, and so candidly believed himself in the coming 600 louis, that, notwithstanding so many previous failures, I really partook of his persuasion; but, alas! the illusion soon vanished, and I returned a few hours after.

"'I hope you did not accept any thing but gold!' he exclaimed the moment he saw me.

"'Sir, they would not give me any thing——

"'But bank-notes? the shabby rascals.'

"'No, sir—but——'

"'What, silver then? the blackguards! to pay for divine ambrosia in vile metal—in base crowns—as they would for treacle, or dried plums. What beggarly shop-keepers! They ought to make a new coin out of diamonds, to pay the children of Apollo.'

"'They offered me nothing at all, sir,' said I wofully.

"'Did you not find the booksellers at home?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Well?'

"'Why, sir, one of them gave me this letter for you; and the others told me that, just now, trade was bad; that they durst not speculate, especially for an unknown author.'

"'The dolts! the asses!' exclaimed Balthazar; 'they little dream of the pith and power which lurks within the unknown Bonaparte, before the siege of Toulon was unknown! The unknown! Why it's the very foundation of our time! So then, the mer-

ciless Philistines did not look into my manuscripts?'

"'No, sir, they would not even suffer me to pull them out of the bag.'

"'They did not read them, and therefore they declined them, of course,' said Balthazar Roger in a tone of dignified composure, 'but they shall pay dearly for their want of taste. I 'll lay on another hundred *louis* for each work; is that enough, Martin? a hundred *louis* extra?'

"'Sir——'

"'You are plain-spoken, true, and disinterested, Martin! Tell me, then, is a hundred louis enough? I feel a pleasure in making you the umpire over the purse-strings of those Pharisees,—do you wish me to say two hundred louis extra?'

"'Oh! sir——'

"'Well let it be only a hundred. You are lenient, young man, you are too generous! So then it is 900 louis in gold that you must return with to-morrow—for they will read my poems, I promise you, the brutes, they will read them, on the spot,—I have an infallible means to oblige them. Come hither to-morrow morning betimes. I wish to have the money by two o'clock—you shall have a poundage of twenty-five louis for yourself—a little fortune my boy, and you shall buy some little shop and stock with it to set you up in business. You will become a fundholder. James Lafitte came to Paris only with two louis in his pocket,—you have got five-and-twenty. So you may become twenty-three times richer than he. That 's how I like to reward an honest messenger. Martin, take my boots, but do n't tickle them too hard with your brush, for one of the poor little dears is beginning to smile rather too broadly through the upper leather. Come to-morrow, my boy.'

"All these whimsical fancies as to the fortune in store for me, were seriously meant by the poet. In the excitement of his warm imagination, the most baseless expectation became a sound reality in his esteem; then he would rouse himself again, and betake himself to his work with indefatigable zeal, sometimes remaining two or three days without stirring out.

"The poet had promised me twenty-five louis; that sum, or even the twenty-fifth part of it, would then have been very seasonable. For a month nearly, Balthazar had taken up almost all my time for his literary messages: he had not yet paid me for them; I was in great straits, and had just run out of a saving of some ten or twelve francs, which my former receipts had allowed me to husband.

"Balthazar, whom much to my repugnance I had once asked for some money, said to me with great dignity:

"'For shame, Martin, I am thinking of something for you, very different from a pitiful daily allowance.'

"This rather indefinite answer prevented me at least from renewing my request. Balthazar was so good, so cordial, that I should have been afraid of offending him. So I patiently resigned myself to wait on; without at all conceiving in what way I could emerge from my situation, if it lasted much longer.

"Although I did not implicitly rely on the twenty-five louis as a gratification, and the receipt of the 900 louis that I was to effect the following day, I 'saw so much confidence in Balthazar, and stood so much in need myself of the success of the undertaking, that I could not help in some degree partaking in his hopes.

But alas! the next morning only brought with it a new disappointment. This time, the booksellers not only refused to read the letters and inspect the manuscripts, but they all but drove me away.

"I went lingeringly up the five different storeys to Balthazar's room, with my bag under my arm, and the empty money chest in my hand; pondering for the best and least offensive manner in which I could give the poet a second hint to let me have something on account, for in consequence of arrears, they had just before given me warning to quit the little closet I slept in, in the Rue Saint Nicholas.

"When I reached Balthazar's room, the door was open; I saw to my surprise, a trunk and carpet bag in the small entry before the poet's chamber, and heard through the half-open door several shouts and merry peals of laughter, and in the midst of them these words:

"'My worthy Robert—my dear Robert, what a pleasant surprise is this!'

"On hearing the name of Robert it reminded me of the traveller whose luggage I had carried from the steam-boat, the same person, who, notwithstanding his disguise had been detected, arrested in my presence, and doubtless taken off to prison.

"I cast my eyes on the trunk which lay in the entry, and there I beheld the same address I had noticed the former time:—Count Robert de Mareuil.

"It was clear this was the companion of Regina's childhood, the very Robert whom the gentleman at the *Three Butts* had spoken of as a rival, the last time we met.

"Since her abrupt and transient apparition, which had served to dispel my sad and desperate determinations, I had not seen Regina again; but my fond passion for her, far from moderating, had still further increased amidst the rude trials I had to endure, having continually before me these sayings of my benefactor, Claude Gerard:

"We are unable to see the Creator, and yet we worship him; we reverence him, we feel that he guards and supports us in the right way. Let it be the same with your love for this young lady, the guiding star of your career in this life.

"And so it had been: I adored Regina invisible and absent as she was; and that love had given me sufficient strength to resist the enticements and temptations which poverty so seldom escapes.

"Thereupon the unforeseen meeting with Robert de Mareuil was for many reasons of the highest interest to me. And when I knocked at the door of the apartment where Balthazar and Robert now sat together, my heart was violently beating.

"'Come in,' said the poet to me.

"Then, as soon as he caught sight of me, he exclaimed with delighted expectation—

"'Robert, here comes our Spanish galleon! You come in good time—we have got a cargo of gold.'

"Saying which, the credulous poet, whose eyes sparkled like carbuncles, seized the famous money chest; but, finding it fearfully light, he shrugged up his shoulders, and cried out with hastiness and vexation—

"'There! those bank-notes *again!* The beggarly grubs! to send me their dog's-eared paper.'

"It would be in vain to attempt to describe the expression of sincere disgust with which Balthazar Roger opened the box, which he expected to contain those pitiful bank-notes.

"He opened the box: it was empty.

"Ever composed and dignified, he did not even wink.

"'I say, Balthazar,' said Robert who seemed well acquainted with his friend's fancies. 'Where is our cargo of gold?'

"'Wait till to-morrow,' answered the princely Balthazar, 'it shall come upon us like a tide. In the meantime until that fortunate event, you do n't intend to leave me, I hope. There is a room close to this—you must take it.'

"'That 's just what I mean to do,' said Robert. 'Could you believe I would lodge elsewhere? But stay! I must inform my cousin of my arrival—it is very urgent.'

"'What cousin do you speak of? What's his name?'

"'The Baron of Noirlieu.'

"'Ah! that eccentric savage. The father of that charming girl whom you——'

"On a signal from Robert the poet stopped short. The two friends looked at each other, and thus my confusion escaped their observation.

"The baron of Noirlieu was the father of Regina.

"'I understand you, Robert,' said Balthazar to his friend. 'In such matters we cannot be too discreet. But make yourself easy. Martin whom you see there, and whom I hereby recommend to your patronage, is simplicity and honesty personified; he has the good fortune to be as dull as a goose, as active and nimble as a stag, as punctual as a clock,—all which makes him an incomparable messenger. So then I claim your protection for Martin.'

"Robert glanced at me for a moment with disdainful indifference; I looked down trembling lest he might recognise me; but my alarm was unfounded, and Robert said to his friend:

"'What lad is this?"

"'My cash collector,' answered Balthazar, wrapping himself up with dignity in his old dressing-gown—a treasure for his honesty. 'Since I have employed him I have never known him to be mistaken in his accounts even to a farthing.'

"'That I am sure of,' returned Robert, with a laugh; 'and as his duties as your cash collector must leave him plenty of spare time, permit me to trust him with a message.'

"'I empower you to do so, Robert.'

"'First of all give me pen, ink, and paper.'

"'You are aware, Robert, that there are two classes of privileged beings, with whom you are certain to find pens twisted like hunting bugles, and ink as crusty as brine. These classes are your porters and your poets. Now, being a poet, and belonging, therefore, to one of those privileged classes, this is all I can do for you.'

"And then, waving his hand, Balthazar pointed out to his friend a pomatum pot, at the bottom of which lay a thick blackish slime. So thick indeed was that viscous liquid, that the well-worn featherless pen stood up erect in the middle of it.

"'Now for a sheet of paper,' said Robert, looking in vain over the poet's table for that article, and on which table, however, lay scattered a stopper, a decanter, a pair of tongs, and a frock-coat. At length, after a painful search, the two friends succeeded in ferreting out a decent sheet of paper; the ink was properly diluted, Count Robert de Mareuil cleared off one of the angles of the table so strangely encumbered, and began to write, observing to his friend:—

"'After all, I am not so positive that this letter will be of any use.'

"'First of all, whom are you writing to?'

"'To my cousin.'

"'The Baron of Noirlieu?'

"'Himself.'

"'And why do you think your letter will be of no use?'

"'They say the Baron is going out of his mind.'

"'Psha! What for?'

"'Through grief.'

"'What kind of grief?'

"'The grief which made George Dandin complain to his father and mother-in-law,' said Robert de Mareuil, looking slyly at his friend.

"It was evident they both believed that this observation was perfectly unintelligible to me.

"'Alack, poor Baron,' said Balthazar, in a voice of ludicrous sympathy; 'is he mad on that account—has it affected his head?' Then, correcting himself: 'Excuse your friend, Robert; this jest is only worthy of an attorney or a dentist, fortunate in his amours. But, really, this madness, if it exists, must worry and annoy you.'

"'Why should it?' said Robert eagerly, and looking up.

"'Why, on account of—you know what I mean.

"'On the contrary,' said Robert, looking stedfastly at the poet.

"'How do you mean?'

"'To be sure.'

"'But I allude to Donna Elvira, or, if you prefer it, to Donna Anna, you volatile Don Juan,' said Balthazar.

"Exactly so,' answered Robert de Mareuil; 'when once he is put up on his pedestal the commander will be out of everybody's way.'

"'Good! good—very good! Now I see your meaning,' said Balthazar Roger. 'But you can easily find out whether the Baron is mad or nearly so.'

"'Not so easy as you may think, Mr. Poet; for there is a certain grim-visaged mulatto—Melchior is his name—a confidential valet, who does not so readily allow a visitor to go straight up to the Baron.'

"'Grease old Cerberus's paw. Besides you can make inquiries. Who shall you send this letter by?'

"'Your collecting clerk,' replied Robert, signing to me with a slight nod, without breaking off his letter.

"'I have just thought of something—a capital thought,' cried Balthazar Roger.

And thereupon, doubtless to ponder over and ripen the said idea, the poetical enthusiast began to stride up and down his chamber, leaving Count Robert to conclude his important mission to his uncle.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FANCIFUL POET BALTHAZAR ROGER, ENGAGES YOUNG MARTIN AS MAN-SERVANT TO HIM AND COUNT ROBERT.

"It required the use of all my self-command to enable me to assume a look of indifference and unconcern during the progress of a conversation so full of intense interest to me. I was about to learn the dwelling of Regina's father, and it was possible I might perceive her for a moment in that house.

"Thanks to the diffusive instructions of the village schoolmaster, I had grown tolerably familiar with the masterpieces of our language, and was fully able to appreciate the mystic sense of the comparison borrowed from Don Juan by Balthazar and Count Robert; Regina was meant. If serious, the father's malady would make him less *troublesome*.

"Less troublesome? for Robert's designs, I suppose? But what designs were they? That's what remained for me to discover, and very anxious and uneasy it made me to think of.

"I flattered myself I knew Balthazar sufficiently well to feel convinced that he would not take part in any bad or shameful projects: but I knew nothing of Robert's character or of his previous history. All I knew about him was, that he had been arrested three months before. Was he just come out of prison? Was Balthazar ignorant of that arrest? such were my reflections at that time.

"It was too important to me to discover the truth relative to Count Robert, not to examine and study his countenance with the closest attention. I indulged very freely in this observation whilst Robert was writing his letter and Balthazar was pacing his room and too deeply engaged with his own thoughts to notice me.

"As I was occupied in thus strictly examining

Count Robert, I merely remarked at that time that the garments he wore were here and there white at the seams and glistened with long use; his hat was rusty and napless, his boots trodden down at the heel, his linen rather yellow and soiled. Still, so great were the native refinement and the attraction of the young gentleman's features that I had not at first taken notice of the meanness of his attire: his face, if not regularly handsome, was infinitely charming and expressive, his chesnut hair, and soft silky beard, turned into a natural curl; his head rested proudly in its attitude, his forehead was high, his eyes sparkling and bold, whilst the arch smile of his lip, his straight slender nose bespoke at once both determination and craftiness.

"The countenance, collectively taken, was more likely to inspire confidence than distrust, and, yet, whether it was owing to prejudice or to instinctive dislike, certain twitches in the eye-brows, certain nervous winks, attended with smiles bordering on the sardonic, which Robert could not forbear disclosing as he bent over his letter, lent to his countenance, on more than one occasion, a look so false, so insidious, and so stern that I was very much struck with its expression.

"I stood by in silence, waiting at the door, assuming as dull and stupid a deportment as I could, to receive Count Robert's letter, whilst the poet, striding up and down his apartment, continued to ripen his idea; at length it grew mellow, for, stopping short, and facing about, he said:

"'Martin, you are an honest faithful lad.'

"'Sir, you are very kind to say so.'

"'I mean to provide you with a respectable situation.'

"'Me, sir?'

"I thought in my simplicity that he was going to mention again the twenty-five louis which were to render me twenty-three times richer than James Lafitte; but no. Balthazar often forgot, with singular modesty, the numberless millions with which his fertile imagination endowed him and those too that he lavished on other people.

"'Yes, Martin,' he went on to say, 'I am resolved to secure you a respectable situation, and start you in the world.'

"'How good you are, sir.'

"'Tell me then, since you have been employed on my messages, I have never paid you I think?'

"'No, sir; but——'

"'Let us think no more about a thing so paltry, you shall have it all in good time. Now, listen to me: Count Robert de Mareuil, my friend, is henceforth to live here with me; instead of employing you as a sort of servant *off and on*, we should prefer having a faithful and devoted servant: will you engage yourself to us as our servant?'

"'Sir?'

"'Stop till you hear me out, and then answer. You shall have your board, lodging, and washing, warming, and lighting:—you shall be dressed booted, blackened, shaved, perfumed, and esteemed! You shall have fifty francs a month for your wages: they shall accumulate into a capital and be paid every year with the interest; now, you have no idea, Martin, what results from the capitalisation of interest, and of interest upon interest. In fifty years' time, with nothing but your wages thus accumulating, you will be a Baring, a Rougemont, or a Rothschild. Will that suit you, say?'

"There was no resisting the fatal lure of these millions. Twenty-three times as rich as James Lafitte, and afterwards a Baring, a Rougemont, or a Rothschild with my capital of fifty years' wages accumulated with interest upon interest. But that which appeared to me most clear and positive in the poet's proposal, was this—that the excellent man, being at that time hard up and unable to pay me for my errands, felt the shortest way would be to take me into his service.

"Before Count Robert's arrival I should probably have declined the poet's offer, and whilst I was waiting for the return of the season, to get work in my trade as a carpenter, I should have changed my street to prevent my being tempted to undertake Balthazar's messages without pay, for, in spite of his foolish exalted ideas, his heart was so good, his character so generous, that I was really attached to him; but the presence of Count Robert, and an undefinable feeling of dismay relative to Regina, induced me to accept, for the present at least, the proposal so flatteringly put. However weak the tie might be which was going to connect me with Regina, I seized upon it, hoping that I might be able to render her some service unknown to herself, and thus continue to work out that mission of obscure devotion, which had begun with the sacred attention I had paid to her mother's grave.

"Balthazar doubtless imagined that I was reflecting on his offer, for he said to me:

"'Do n't answer me too hastily, Martin, but when once taken let your resolution be immutable.'

"Dreading to raise suspicion by too promptly embracing the offer, I faltered out:

"'But, sir, I do n't know whether I shall suit: so many things are requisite to make a good servant.'

"'You possess all those requirements: you are, above all, simple and candid—yes you are one of those to whom the kingdom of heaven is promised, and who will possess hereafter a fine pair of white wings attached to their sides through all eternity. God keep me from your Frontins, your Scapins, your Figaros! and all such cunning, sly, and artful servants. You do n't of course understand what I mean by those names. You look at me in dumb stupidity, my worthy Martin. So much the better—that 's just what I like. You have got but one only fault—you have learned to read; but at all events you cannot write?'

"'Excuse me, sir, I can a little.'

"'So much the worse: education is the ruin of honest natures; but nobody can be perfect. Besides, by dint of application you may unlearn again. So tell me, are you decided? Will you be our servant?'

"'If you think I shall be able to suit you, sir, why I do n't mind trying.'

"'Good! now you belong to us, and I give you forty-five francs in earnest money to clench the bargain. They shall go to your other capital.'

"'Thank you, sir.'

"'There 's no occasion. Well! Robert, have you finished your letter?' said Balthazar to his friend.

"And then seeing that the latter, occupied in reading over his missive, was in no hurry to reply, Balthazar again called out:

"'Robert, what are you thinking of?'

"'I was reading over what I had written,' said the young man, beginning to fold his letter into its shape.

"It was now necessary to find wax, or at least a wafer: there was no such thing.

"'What!' said Robert: 'no means of sealing a letter? how then do you manage?'

"'I never seal them at all,' replied Balthazar; 'I defy anybody to read mine—they may if they can.'

"'Yes, I dare say you do—such illegible ciphers; I am obliged to guess half of what you write. But for my part, as unfortunately my writing is not so well screened from the inquisitive, I really wish to seal this letter.'

"'I have it,' cried Balthazar.

"Then he went and took up off a chest of drawers a huge roll of the draft-paper used by architects to sketch their plans upon.

"And truly there were plans designed upon that scroll,

"'What the deuce have you got there?' inquired Robert.

"'The plan of a new palace I am building.'

"'Are you building a palace?'

"'The workmen are to begin the day after to-morrow; and you, Robert, shall lay the first stone,' said Balthazar.

"Then turning to me, the poet continued more seriously:

"'To-morrow evening you must be sure to inquire after a silver trowel and ebony-hod, as essential parts of the ceremony. Don't forget this order, Martin.'

"'As you please,' said Robert, apprehending a new burst of poetic effusion; 'you shall build your palace in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine; but let me remind you that my letter is yet to be sealed.'

"'Exactly,' returned Balthazar, with a shrug, and opening the roll of paper, on which lay the plan of a splendid palace surrounded by gardens, parks, and pleasure grounds. The front view, the side view—nothing was wanting. And several small narrow bands of papers lay carefully pasted here and there.

"'Do you see these little bands?' asked the poet.

"'Balthazar, I want to seal my letter: I won't budge from that point.'

"'No, sir,' answered I, stupefied, this time; 'for I believed in the palace.

"But Count Robert, who doubtless understood better than I did the freaks and flights of his friend's fancy, said to him very quietly:

"'Be it so: I will lay the first stone of your new palace to-morrow; but——'

"'In the Faubourg Saint-Antoine,' exclaimed the excited poet; 'the old aristocratic district of Paris. I shall find imitators; we will found a capital within this capital; the capital is the country;—the country is France;—France is at the head of all Europe. I will call my new district, *the European district.*'

"'I know it, and that's why I allude to these bands; I paste them—what with? With this piece of glue. So, don't say I wander from the point. By-and-by we will talk about the palace; you shall give me your opinion: I want to give orders for the embellishment of the grounds—fifty or sixy groups of the finest marble; I am quite undetermined. Pradier is full of grace and elegance, but David's chisel is more powerful, longer, and more dignified. Then, there's Duseigneur, Flatters, Barrye, all full of original conceptions. To choose among them is the grand difficulty.'

"Robert having once got possession of the precious piece of glue, had been sealing his letter as well as he could, and took no further notice of the poet. As for me, I was perfectly convinced; the sight of the plan, and the order for a silver trowel and ebony hod to lay the foundation-stone, had driven away all my doubts. I began to look upon Balthazar as one of those eccentric characters among the rich who love to conceal their opulence beneath a shabby exterior; so that now my twenty-five louis no longer seemed a fable. But soon other more serious thoughts took possession of me; for Count Robert said to me, as he handed me the letter he had just been writing:

"'Do you know, my lad, where to find the Rue du Faubourg du Roule?'

"'Yes, sir, almost. I have not been long yet in Paris; but I will inquire, and will make it out, you may depend upon it.'

"'You will call it No. 119.'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'You will then ask to see the Baron of Noirlieu. Besides, you can read, and the name is on the address.'

"'Good, sir.'

"'And now for my idea,' cried Balthazar, interrupting his friend.

"'What idea?'

"'To find out whether the baron really is in the state of Hamlet or Ophelia as a sequel to that of George Dandin.'

"'But how?' said Robert.

"The poet turned to me and said—

"'When you reach the hotel, you will tell the porter you have a letter to deliver to the baron.'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'But only to the baron, and you must give it to nobody but himself,—do you understand me?'

"'Indeed! sir, I do my best.'

"Balthazar looked at his friend with radiant satisfaction, and pointing to me:

"'Did I not tell you the lad would never be a Figaro?'

"'What!' resumed Count Robert pettishly, 'can't you understand that you are desired not to deliver this letter to any one but the baron?'

"'Oh! yes, sir, now I have it; I will give it to none but the baron himself.'

"'That will do,' said Balthazar; 'and now for another question. Have you a good memory?'

"'What do you mean, sir?'

"Invaluable simplicity! I mean, when you have heard any thing, do you remember it afterwards?'

"'Oh! no, sir: a day or two after I forget it all.'

"'Very well! then whilst you are delivering the letter to the baron, look at him attentively, examine his face, observe what he does, and pay the greatest attention to what he says on receiving or reading the letter. Do all you can to remember these circumstances, and return here immediately to impart them to us. In so short a time you will hardly have forgotten them!'

"'No, sir, not immediately as that would be. But to-morrow I shall have forgotten all about it.'

"'You hear him? Was I not right to say that lad is without his equal,' exclaimed the poet.

"'If they inquire who sent you with the letter,' added the poet's friend, 'you will say it was Count Robert of Mareuil, just arrived——'

"Count Robert paused a moment and then continued:

"'Who has just arrived from Britany.'

"'From Britany, you understand that!' said Balthazar, and just then methought he stifled a violent burst of laughter: 'from Britany?' he added.

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Go then, and make haste,' resumed Count Robert. But I have forgotten one thing: should they absolutely refuse to admit you to the baron, bring back the letter—and tell the servant that you will return to-morrow morning about nine o'clock.'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'And, at the same time,' resumed Count Robert, after a short pause, 'you will take notice whether, among the servants you meet, there is one who is a mulatto.'

"'Mulatto, sir,—what is that?'

"'A man of the colour of ginger-bread, or nearly so,' said Balthazar.

"'Very good,—now I understand.'

"'And if, by any chance,' continued Count Robert, with some confusion, 'you should be ushered into the baron's presence, and should see there a young lady—rather tall, and very pretty, and who has three small spots on her face;—you see she is easy to recognise?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Well,' continued Count Robert, 'you will notice whether the young lady is very pale, and looks out of spirits.'

"'There's nothing difficult in that,' observed the poet.

"'Surely not, sir; any one who is very pale, and looks out of spirits,—that is seen at once, sir.'

"'Then, my worthy Martin, now spread your wings, and fly off and away.

"I was making towards the door; but just as I was going out, I bethought myself, and with a simple look at Balthazar—

"'Sir,' inquired I, 'where must I apply for the silver trowel?'

"'Eh!' cried the poet, staring with all his might.

"'Yes, sir,—for the silver trowel you told me to purchase?'

"'I told you to purchase a silver trowel?' answered the poet, looking at me.

"'And an ebony hod, sir.'

"'An ebony hod?'

"The poor poet was quite bewildered.

"'Of course,' resumed Count Robert, bursting out into a horse laugh; 'for the foundation.'

"'What foundation?' inquired the poet in the utmost amazement, and facing about to his companion.

"'The foundation stone.'

"'The foundation stone?'

"'Of your palace, you shallow brains.'

"'Of my palace?'

"'Of your capital—within the capital of your district of New-Europe. What the devil are you thinking of, Balthazar?'

"'Why, zounds! could you not tell me your story in one breath?' cried the poet. 'There you are both telling every word separately, like the beads of a rosary. Certainly, Martin must buy the trowel and the hod sanctified by custom.'

"'Sir,—where do they sell such things?' inquired I of the poet: 'besides, I have got no money.'

"'Stay,—wait a moment!' he exclaimed, as if a new reflection had suddenly struck him.

"'What day will it be after to-morrow?'

"'This is Tuesday,' said I ingenuously; 'the day after to-morrow will be Thursday.'

"'Thursday! the eve of a Friday!' cried the poet, with an explosion of dismay and indignation. 'What! lay the foundation stone of my palace on the eve of a Friday, to see it come down upon my head? Fatal idea!—what an ill-omen! what a sad prognostication!'

"And afterwards, slowly, and in solemn tone, he added—

"'No, Martin, no; bring back neither trowel nor hod, my boy,—unless you wish to see your poor master buried beneath the rubbish of his own palace.'

"'Oh! sir!'

"'I was certain I knew your heart: go, then, and do your errand, and return as quick as possible.'

"'I am going, sir,' said I, walking towards the door.

"And just as I was closing it behind me, I heard the poet's voice repeating—

"'The eve of a Friday!—never! On that point I am as superstitious as Napoleon.'

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"I set off towards the Faubourg du Roule with eager—with feverish impatience.

"The Baron of Noirlieu's address was the same as that I had seen on the slip of parchment, adorned with a royal crown and symbolical figures, and which was among the papers contained in the pocket-book belonging to the mother of Regina.

CHAPTER X.

MARTIN SEES THE BEAUTIFUL REGINA AGAIN.

"I SOON reached the farther end of the Faubourg du Roule, where Regina's father's house was situated. I approached it by a long wall, in the middle of which stood a coach-gate; and not far off a carriage was waiting, drawn by a splendid team of horses; as I came nearer, methought I remembered the brown and blue livery edged with silver galoons worn by the attendants on little Viscount Scipio, at the rencounter in the forest of Chantilly.

"Struck by this meeting, and desirous of clearing up my doubts, I applied to the coachman, and pretending to be dazzled by the beauty of his steeds, I said to him—

"'I believe this fine carriage and horses belong to Count Durivean—do n't they, sir?'

"'Yes,' grunted the coachman, contemptuously.

"Now my interest and curiosity were increased tenfold. Claude Gerard had spoken to me of the Count with so much aversion; he had painted him in such dark and odious colours, that my uneasiness increased as I reflected and wondered what object could have brought the Count to the house of Regina's father. And then I recollected that the drunken stranger had spoken of a man of *riper age* who was likewise a suitor to that lovely maiden.

"Impressed and busied with these thoughts, I knocked at the gate; which was opened to me directly. Seeing no porter's lodge, I advanced towards a large out-house, or pavilion, situated between the court-yard and the garden. Just at that moment, on the upper steps of a noble flight, appeared the mulatto servant who had usually accompanied Regina in her annual visits to her mother's grave. He was dressed in black, and his look was stern and gloomy.

"'What 's your business?' said he, sharply, and stopping the way.

"'I want, sir, to speak to the Baron of Noirlieu.'

The mulatto scanned me fiercely from head to foot like one who is indignantly surprised at the audacious pretensions of an intruder, and turned on his heel as he replied—

"'The Baron sees nobody now.'

"'But, sir, I have brought a letter for him.'

"'A letter?' repeated he, turning back; 'that 's another thing. Where is it?'

"'I have been ordered, sir, to deliver it only to the Baron.'

"'I told you the Baron sees nobody;—give me the letter.'

"'Impossible, sir. It is of the greatest consequence, and I dare not give it to any other than the Baron.'

"'If you won't give it me, forward it by post,' answered the mulatto, peevishly.

"I can't do that, sir; I must have an immediate answer. If I must not see the Baron to-day, inform me at what time to-morrow I may return.'

"What an obstinate fellow!' cried the mulatto, in a rage. 'I tell you again you can't see the Baron at all—either to-day, to-morrow, nor any day afterwards. Is that not clear and positive? Once for all, give me the letter, or go about your business.'

"'Count Robert de Marcuil, who sent me with it,' replied I, closely watching the mulatto's features, 'commanded me——'

"The mulatto did not hear me out; but starting at the name, he exclaimed—

"'Is Count Robert in Paris?'

"I was about to reply, when the noise of several doors being opened and shut, and footsteps approaching behind him, caused the mulatto to turn quickly round. At the same moment, I saw a man issue from the hall: he was still young, of elegant mien and attire; his face was strongly marked, and of a lofty and fierce expression.

"'Does the Count wish his carriage to be brought into the yard?' said the mulatto, with great signs of deference.

"I could no longer doubt it was Count Duriveau.

"'No—it is unnecessary, Melchior,' answered the Count, in a kind voice.

"He continued his way, and whilst going down the steps, he added—

"'Here, Melchior, I have something to say to you.'

"And the Count proceeded to the street-gate, accompanied by the mulatto, to whom he spoke in a low voice, but with a certain degree of earnest gesticulation.

"Availing myself of the momentary freedom which chance had thrown in my way, I looked stealthily about, with anxious, inquisitive eyes; Regina was certainly in that house. I strove to dive with my looks beyond the hall out of which Count Duriveau had come, but nothing could I see.

"Suddenly within the ground-floor of the house, the windows of which reached to the floor, a sound of voices began to swell, as if two persons were disputing with unusual vehemence; and almost immediately one of the windows was flung open a paces from where I was standing, and Regina appeared with flushed cheeks, and eyes glistening with tears, her countenance at once expressive of irritation and grief.

"'No—no,' she cried, in a faltering voice: 'No—never!'

"Then the young girl swept her hand over her forehead and seeming to try to dissipate her emotion, she leaned her elbow for a moment on the balcony of the window, as if she desired both to put a stop to a conversation which had provoked her, and to cool her parched brow by the contact of the cold air.

"The mulatto and Count Duriveau continued speaking under the roof of the street-gate, and thus they had neither heard the window open, nor perceived the young lady.

"Never had she appeared to me endowed with a beauty so commanding;—her long dark hair, twisted in two thick plaits, encompassed her pure countenance, as chaste and pure as that of Diana; a plain black dress, symmetrically adjusted to her

noble yet slender figure, completed the austere appearance of the beauteous maiden.

"I stood contemplating her with a sort of timid respectful adoration, and unwittingly my eyes filled with tears as I thought inwardly—

"'Poor unfortunate, hide that love which is thy life, thy strength—hide it at the bottom of thy heart; let thy soul's only directress remain for ever in ignorance that you pray and invoke her, and are devoted to her cause, as far as so obscure and miserable a wretch can be serviceable to her by his unknown devotion.

"Buried in her grief, and absorbed in the violence of her feelings, Regina no doubt had not observed me, for she was looking straight before her, whilst I could only see her profile, concealed almost entirely within the door-way; but having chanced to turn her head towards me, the young lady abruptly withdrew, and closed the window.

"This move was so instantaneous that Regina had not had time even to look at me; she had merely perceived that somebody stood by, and on making that discovery had instantly retired.

"This incident had taken up so little time, that when the mulatto, after having respectfully made his bow to Count Duriveau, after his interview with him, had opened the street-gate, Regina had vanished.

Count Duriveau was going out; his foot already stood on the sill, when turning round to the mulatto, who was approaching to meet me, and felt annoyed I presume at having left me there by myself, he said to him loud enough for me to hear him:

"'Melchior, I forgot to ask you to remind the Baron that I shall come to-morrow at two o'clock to take him and Miss Regina to the Louvre.'

"'I shall be sure to do so, Count,—your lordship may rely upon it,' said Melchior, turning back and facing M. Duriveau.

"The latter then went out, and the mulatto hastened up to where I was standing.

"'Why have you stood at that door?' said he, suspiciously.

"'Nay—sir, I was waiting here for you, not knowing where to go.'

"'You ought to have come down from those steps and waited in the court-yard. Did n't you tell me you had brought a letter to the Baron from Count Robert of Mareuil?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Is it long since the Count came to Paris?' inquired Melchior, fixing on me a very searching look at the same time.

"'He came this morning, sir.'

"'Where does he reside?'

"'At the Hotel de l'Europe in the Rue de Provence.'

"'Are you one of his servants?'

"'No, sir, I am a messenger.'

"Melchior reflected a moment and then replied—

"'Where is the letter?'

"'Here it is, sir; but my instructions are to deliver it only to the Baron.'

"'Follow me,' returned the mulatto, and thereupon he led the way.

"I followed behind, going through the hall. Afterwards he turned into a gallery,—opened the door of a waiting-room—told me to wait in it, and then he passed on into another room.

"The saloon where I was now left, was modestly furnished, and the walls were closely covered with family pictures, some of which I saw by their costumes went back to a very early age, for in the dark back-ground of one of the portraits representing a cavalier bearing a cask and breast-plate, these words were painted in white characters:—'Gaston the 5th, Sire de Noirlieu, 1220. On almost all these portraits were emblazoned the arms of that ancient family, with this device, many times repeated—*Fort et Fier*—(strong and proud).

"This device reminded me of the lofty energetic look I had so recently remarked in Regina's aspect,—Regina, the worthy descendant of that lordly house.

"In the course of a few minutes the mulatto returned, and said to me with a smile of ironical triumph—

"'Exactly as I had forewarned you, the baron cannot admit any one to-day, nor to-morrow, nor afterwards;—so leave the letter with me, or send it by post.'

"I felt it would be useless to persist any longer, and left the house without giving up my letter, the mulatto attending me to the door and closing it.

"Nevertheless, in one quarter of an hour I had learned a great deal: I did not know as yet whether they would interest Count Robert, my new master, as much as they did me.

"So, in the first place, I knew that Count Duriveau—a man, proud, selfish, and depraved,—seemed to be intimately connected with the Baron and Regina, since he was to escort them on the morrow to the Louvre, which was a proof that the baron's mind could not be in so dangerous a state of disorder, since he intended to visit the exhibition.

"Secondly, Regina seemed to have held that very day, and directly on the departure of Count Duriveau, a very sharp dispute with the baron, undoubtedly a very painful one likewise, since the young lady had abruptly broken off the discourse with tearful eyes, and testifying the most determined refusal.

"Finally, the baron did not appear to entertain for his young cousin, Robert, a very lively sympathy, if I might judge by the chilliness with which he had greeted his message. By uniting to these several facts the recollection of the stranger at the *Three Butts*, I experienced a sense of indefinable terror for that young lady, whose hand was probably coveted by these three personages:—

"Count Duriveau, whose detestable character had been revealed to me by Claude Gerard;—

"The stranger, who disguised himself in wretched attire to go and get intoxicated with strong brandy in the dens and cellars of the remotest suburbs;—

"Count Robert, of Mareuil, lately a prisoner; and who, I cannot tell why, filled me with distrust which I could not overrule.

"But, alas! admitting that the pursuits of one of these pretenders were to be crowned with a success—fatal it might be to Regina—what means did I possess to protect her against people so rich, or of so high a station?—I,—so miserable and insignificant;—I, who in the hopes of attaching myself to Regina—by the weakest tie—had just accepted the place of servant to Count Robert.

"As these doubts occurred to me, my dejection sometimes became intolerable: however, a secret voice prompted me not to desert the girl, and foretold to me that, however humble my devotion might be, it would probably be useful to her, since chance had at least disclosed to me who the people were whose persecution was to be feared, or whose hidden vices and sinister designs were unknown to her.

"After deeply reflecting on these points, and whilst I hastened home to Balthazar, I laid down the following course as my rule of conduct:—

"First,—I would endeavour to find out what were the designs of Count Robert with reference to Regina; then I would observe, study, and examine with sincerity and honest zeal, the behaviour of that young man. I would likewise endeavour to know what might be the objects of Count Duriveau, and have recourse to every means which chance or circumstances might suggest, in order to make out the stranger of the *Three Butts*. In order to effect these aims, I determined in my approaching interview with Count Robert to relate, to conceal, or even to mystify, if need were, the various incidents I had just witnessed at the Baron de Noirlieu's.

"I took this resolution without hesitating—without feeling any remorse. Robert de Mareuil had wanted to make me the blind instrument of his own secret plans, by engaging me to notice and report to him whatever should take place at the baron's in my presence. This incitement to a mean manœuvre, which I should have scorned had it not related to Regina, gave me a right to act without scruple towards Count Robert.

"And besides, my intentions were pure, upright, honest, free from all jealousy, and without any selfish or private motive; more than ever I renounced the stupid and insane desire, not only of being noticed by Regina, but even to be known to her; consequently, I confess it, I felt a kind of melancholy charm in the thought of prosecuting for ever, invisible and unknown, those proofs of devotion, respect, and adoration towards the girl, which I had first begun to practise at her mother's funeral from behind the tree.

"Balthazar, with an unsuspicious confidence worthy of the golden age, and the absence of any article fit to excite the covetousness of thieves, may have partly occasioned this want of care—Balthazar always left the key in his door. So I went into the small entry preceding the poet's bed-chamber, and I heard him exclaim with all his uproarious admiration and habitual sanguineness:

"'They say she is magnificent, stunning, prodigious; beforehand, I swear to adore that creature; I idolize her for her name alone—it 's a whole poem by itself.'

"I entered the room at the risk of interrupting the poet's soliloquy; but my appearance did not assuage his excited fancy.

"'Yes, that name is a poem—an entire poem,' cried Balthazar, striding the room; 'nay, it 's more, —it 's a character—a full-length portrait. Duparc has seen her at the Funambules in a trifling part; and he protests she is a diamond which will shortly sparkle with all its lustre.

"'Well, what of the baron?' said Count Robert eagerly to me, and too busy with serious thoughts to attend to his friend's vociferous ebullitions.

"'Before you answer,' cried Balthazar, 'listen to me: you shall be umpire in the case, young sheep-face; I want to make an experiment on your understanding—so distinguished and honoured by its narrow bounds.'

"'A truce with this folly! let him first give me an account of his message,' said Robert impatiently: 'the case is very urgent.'

"'I will give Martin back to you in a moment,' said Balthazar; and then addressing me: 'Come, Martin, answer me, what do you feel at this name—BASQUINE?'

"The question was so sudden, so fully unexpected, and my astonishment was so great, that I fell backwards a step or two and looked at the poet in amazement.

"'Look there,' cried Balthazar, radiant with triumph: 'did not I tell you that there are names which stagger even those natures the least susceptible of moral electricity?'

"Count Robert only shrugged his shoulders in reply.

"When my first shock had subsided, I felt how dangerous it would be for me to raise the least distrust in my new masters. I don't know what lucky thought inspired me and assured me that, in the present case, I could not act more adroitly than by telling something like the truth; I therefore replied:

"'Oh! bless my heart, sir, that name, did you but know it—how extraordinary!'

"'The name dazzles you, does it not?' exclaimed the poet; 'it glitters in your eyes like a rose-coloured petticoat spangled with silver. The name shines, turns round, and multiplies its shape in your fancy like a whirlpool of bright gold spangles, eh?'

"'No, sir, that is not exactly the thing; but I felt struck all in a heap when you uttered that name just now.'

"'And wherefore so?' inquired Balthazar, whilst the Count kept stamping with increasing impatience.

"'When a child, sir,' replied I to the poet, 'I knew a little girl to whom they had given that name—she sang like a nightingale, and she danced like a fairy; she was fair-haired, and with dark eyes.'

"'Cruel fate!' cried Balthazar. 'This marvel in art, expression, and poetry,—who, still engulphed in obscurity,—may perhaps burst forth to-morrow before the whole world like a rocket; Basquine has played on the platform of a mountebank! Robert, we must go this very night to the Funambules. We will reveal her to the dunces, who know her not as yet; we will decree her a triumph—an apotheosis!'

"Count Robert de Mareuil, driven beyond all bounds by his friend's eccentricities, said to him in a sad and vexed tone:

"'Balthazar, you forget that this matter is very serious to me.'

"Excuse me, my friend, I was wrong,' answered Balthazar in a feeling manner. 'Call me a madman if you will, but not a selfish fellow.' Then, turning to me:

"'Have you seen the baron?'

"'No, sir.'

"'I was sure of it,' cried Robert pettishly; 'it was the mulatto who received you?'

"'Yes, sir. I insisted a great deal, but the mulatto would not——'

"Here I broke off and tacked about:

"'You recommended me, sir, to look about me with a sharp eye and observe what took place.'

"'Certainly; well then, what did you observe?'

"'You see, sir, it puzzles me not to begin at the beginning and tell things as they happened.'

"'Be it so, my lad: begin at the beginning then,' said the poet to me, 'it certainly is dull and out of fashion, but you have the classic touch about you. So proceed and say on.'

CHAPTER XI.

COUNT ROBERT SENDS MARTIN TO A TOY-SHOP WHERE HE SEES A NEW DODGE, AND GATHERS SOME NEW EXPERIENCE IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.

"'WELL! sir,' said I to Balthazar, 'I reached the Faubourg du Roule, I knocked at the door, and they let me in; I walked up the court-yard, the mulatto came out; he asked me what I wanted. To deliver this letter into the hands of the Baron of Noirlieu. 'You can't see the baron,' answered the mulatto. At that instant, as I stood on the hall steps with the mulatto, there came out from the house a gentleman who was still young and very well dressed; he spoke to the mulatto, who called him Monsieur Du——(I made believe I was trying to remember Duri——Duri——).

"'Duriveau,' cried Count Robert, with equal surprise and anxiety; then adding—

"'Count Duriveau is tall—dark—and fierce looking, is he not?'

"'Yes, sir, that 's the gentleman's name and appearance.'

"Count Robert here looked at the poet, and said to him, shaking his head—

"'You know how wilful and stubborn that mandevil is; he is immensely rich. Rich could be more dangerous for me than——But continue your tale. Whilst you were speaking to the mulatto, Count Duriveau came out of the baron's house.'

"'Yes, sir, and the mulatto attended him to the

door. Then, that gentleman said to the mulatto, 'Remind the baron I shall call to-morrow about two o'clock, to escort him to the Louvre with Miss Re——Re——'

"'Regina,' cried Robert.

"'Yes, sir, that was the very name.'

"'So, so! To-morrow at two o'clock, at the Louvre,' said Count Robert with a kind of satisfaction mixed with vexation. 'Very good! we shall be there; that is worth knowing. The baron then is not quite so wild or so mad as they presume to give out. Capital! To-morrow we shall be at the Louvre.'

"Then addressing himself to me again, he added:

"'My lad, you are really worth your weight in gold, in spite of your simple look. Proceed. After the departure of Duriveau, you were left with the mulatto?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'What did he say?'

"'As I refused most positively to give my letter to anybody but the baron, the mulatto told me that his master would not admit any one; but I pressed him so hard that at length he conducted me into a parlour full of pictures, and bid me to wait there.'

"'So you saw the baron, after all?'

"'Oh! no, sir. After a few moments, the mulatto came back, and said to me in a funny sort of way:

"'If you won't leave the letter, let the Count de Mareuil write to the baron by post; he will answer him;' and thereupon without any further ceremony, he led me back again to the gate.

"'Always the same rancour and distrust as formerly,' said Robert to the poet, who, resolving to be mute and not interrupt his friend, bent his head to signify his assent.

"'Did you see any young lady in the house?' resumed Robert.

"'No, sir.'

"'You did not make any particular remark?'

"'No, sir, only as I was going out.'

"'Well, what then?'

'That is to say when I had got into the street.'

"'Come—make haste to say.'

"'I had got a few yards from the door when a superb carriage drew up; then I don't know whether I did right, sir; but as you had told me to notice every thing, I looked back to see who was alighting from the fine carriage.'

"'You did perfectly right,' said Count Robert eagerly. 'And who was it alighted from that carriage?'

"'A gentleman with a very mild handsome face, much younger than Count Duriveau, not quite so tall, but likewise very finely dressed.'

"And then in order to complete the story I had invented, I described, as well as I could, the stranger at the *Three Butts*, hoping he might perhaps be known to Count Robert. I should thus have discovered who that singular man was whom I had so much interest to find out.

"But my hope was deceived; notwithstanding the minute particulars I entered into relative to that person, Count Robert, after listening to me with the greatest attention, said to me—

"I do n't know the man. Did you notice the colour of his livery?'

"'Sir?' said I, pretending not to understand.

"'Did you remark what was the colour of his servant's clothes?' resumed Robert.

"'Oh, no! I only looked at the gentleman.'

"'That 's unlucky. That observation might have been of use,' said Robert reflecting. 'Did you observe any thing else?'

"'No, sir.'

"'Think a moment. It often happens that the smallest things are significant, when one has an interest in solving them.'

"'No, sir. I recollect nothing. In vain I strive to think.—Oh! stop, yes, though, I do remember.'

"And here I had recourse to a second invention to provoke still more the Count's jealousy; I wanted to make him as eager as myself to find out who was the stranger.

"'Speak—speak,' resumed the Count.

"'One of the servants, the man behind the coach, said to the one before——'

"'To the coachman?'

"'Yes, sir; he said to the coachman, when the young man had gone in:—'Here we are as usual, for an hour or two at least.'

"'As usual, for one or two hours at least?' repeated Count Robert. 'Did the servant say that? Why that 's most important to be known.'

"'Indeed, sir?'

"Why, you blockhead, don't it prove that the young man is in the habit of frequenting the house?"

"'It may be so, sir.'

"'You must really contrive between this and the next three days at furthest, to make out who the young man is,' said Count Robert after a momentary pause.

"I had got my object. I had rendered the Count as desirous as myself to unfold the mystery, and he was to assist me in my inquiries.

"'Yes,' resumed he, 'you must contrive to find out who that young man is?'

"'I, sir? and what am I to do for that purpose?

"Robert de Mareuil mused a while in silence, and then answered me:'

"'From ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, you will henceforth from to-morrow, post yourself near the baron's house—you will examine every person who calls upon him, and see whether the young man you have described is one of the number. Should he come in his carriage, nothing can be more easy than to learn who he is.'

"'In what way, sir?'

"'By questioning the servants, and asking them their master's name.'

"Oh! sir, I should not dare to do it;—and besides, they may refuse to tell it me.'

"'If they refuse to answer you, there is a very simple means to set them a talking,' resumed Robert. 'You say the young man is young, elegant, and handsome?'

"'Yes, sir, very handsome,—very handsome indeed.'

"Robert proceeded with a frown:

"'Well! you wil' say with a sly discreet look to the servants, that you are sent by a very pretty woman who has noticed their master, and who wishes to know his name and address. The servants will then be sure to tell you. Do you understand?'

"But, sir, since it is not true,' said I with a dull embarrassed look, 'must I then tell a story?'

"'Bravo, innocence!' cried Balthazar, no longer able to keep silent: 'just now you frightened me; you were partly turning into Figaro, but this last trait reassures me. And therefore,' cried the poet with enthusiasm, 'I raise your wages to 15,000 livres for that virtuous reply. Only you will have to find me in boot-jacks, lucifer matches, blacking, and shirt collars.'

"'But, sir, if this young man should not come in a carriage?' said I to Count Robert, 'how can I speak to his servants?'

"'If he comes on foot, you must wait patiently till he comes out from the baron's and then follow him.'

"'Where to, sir?'

"'Wherever he goes, he must sleep somewhere or other.'

"'True, very true,' said I archly and slily; 'and as people always sleep at home, I shall surely find out where he lives.'

"'*People always sleep at home!*' roared Balthazar with a radiant look. 'Martin, to remunerate

your chaste belief, I raise your wages to 60,000 livres; but you must find me in socks, braces, and copper to cross the Bridge of Arts, and present me once a year with five early melons.'

"You are very good, sir,' said I to the poet; then turning to Count Robert: 'when once I discover the gentleman's abode, still I shan't know his name on that account.'

"'You will then go into the porter's lodge, describe the man who has returned that evening, and inquire for his name—I will have an excuse ready for you.'

"'Ah! sir—how very quick and ready you are, sir,' cried I with admiration.

"'Now, for something else,' said Count Robert giving me a letter which had most likely been written whilst I was away. 'You must take this to the passage Bourg l'Abbé, to Mr. Bonin, the keeper of a toy-shop.'

"On hearing the name of Bonin, some vague ideas recurred to my mind; methought I had heard it before; but I could not recollect when, or to whom it belonged.

"'You won't have the same trouble with this letter as with the baron's;' said Count Robert, 'you will deliver it to Mr. Bonin himself;' he seldom out, and he will give you an answer.'

"'Very good, sir.'

"'There go, and make haste back.'

"'And on your return, you will tell the little victualler in the Rue Saint-Nicholas to bring us a dinner for two,' said Balthazar pompously, 'for we mean to board you, Martin, as well as lodge you, and we shall dress you as soon as these vestments which are still right serviceable, are worn out. You shall sleep in the ante-room; the side-board will serve you instead of a chest of drawers; I will lend you my bear-skin from Siberia; whereon, until I have constructed you a proper bed, you may sleep as easily as a king.'

"'Oh, sir, I am not particular,' replied I. 'When I return, I will remove from my last lodgings the few things belonging to me; I shall feel quite comfortable wherever you may put me.'

"'Come, be stirring and make haste,' said the Count; 'you will wait for the toyman, in case he should be gone out.'

"'Good, sir.' And out I went.

"I arrived at the passage Bourg-l'Abbé, a sad, dark passage it was too; just as I was going into it, I was rather violently knocked against by a very young man who had just sprang down out of an elegant cab, whilst his groom stood at the head of a fiery mettlesome horse. After making me a slight excuse, the young man, or rather the stripling, with a smooth and somewhat vulgar face, but very neatly attired, passed on before me; I followed him looking about for the toy-shop.

"As soon as I discovered the shop, I saw the stripling go into it; he was standing by the counter when I presented myself there. Two other persons were waiting in the shop: the first was a *chasseur* or hunter carrying his long hunting knife, and dressed in green with silver shoulder-knots and a plume of cock feathers in his cocked hat. The second was a very pretty girl who seemed to me to be a brisk, airy *soubrette* as far as I could judge by her sprightly looks, her smart little cap, her neat white apron, and her natty attire. The chasseur, a tall gainly lad, kept up a lively conversation with the chamber-maid, sitting by his side; whilst a sallow wrinkled old woman, with a harsh froward aspect, and piercing grey eyes, sat or rather squatted behind the counter.

"The stripling who had entered before me went up to this Megera, and, to my great astonishment, spoke to her in a tone of affectionate deference.

"'Good day, my dear Madame Laridon,' said he to her, 'how do you find yourself?'

"'If you come about the business in question,' said the old hag in a peevish voice, 'you may march yourself back—it can't be done.'

"'How so?' cried the stripling, with much disappointment; 'yesterday it was all settled.'

"'Well! to-day, it's unsettled, that's all.'

"'But, my dear Madame Laridon, it's impossible. M. Bonin knows I rely upon it.'

"'If you stay there ten hours, and bother me all the time,' resumed the hag sharply, 'it will be so much talk thrown away: the governor said no, and no he means.'

"'But then,' cried the stripling in despair, 'he ought not to have promised me to-day.'

"'Let us drop it,' said the old harpy crossing her arms under her apron, and disregarding all the poor youth's entreaties.

"'Never mind,' he exclaimed at last in a voice of bitter vexation, 'I shall wait for M. Bonin.'

"The old woman made a signal with her head and shoulders, which seemed to imply: Do as you like.

"Then perceiving me standing at the door, where I was waiting for the stripling to leave the counter, she said to me:

"'What do you want?'

"'I have brought a letter for M. Bonin, Madame.'

"'He will be in directly; you can give it to him,' she answered.

"There was nothing in the shop to sit down upon except two stools, and they were occupied by the abigail and the chasseur. The stripling looked offended that the great man's lacquey did not give up his seat to him; but the chasseur, very careless of the *impropriety* he was guilty of, exchanged an ironical glance with the sprightly chamber-maid, and pointed out to her the flush of scorn which was spreading over the stripling's countenance.

"More and more surprised at what I saw and heard, I began to examine this singular shop with increasing surprise. Instead of being pleasant and lively, like most warehouses of the same class, with their newly bedizened dolls with their satin and spangles, their tiny abodes, glittering like silver, or their radiant rocking horses all scarlet and tinsel, this shop was dark, dismal, and bare; with the exception of a few stray old toys, faded, dusty and discoloured, displayed there for a *blind*, I could see no toys for children in that dusky place; it was furnished, from ceiling to floor, with large brown paper cases covered with dust.

"As I stood there engaged with my own thoughts, I saw a man come in with long grey moustaches, of tall stature, wearing a black stock, a blue frock coat buttoned up to the throat, an old scurvy hat on one side of his head, and a thick walking stick in his hand.

"In spite of his disguise I knew it was the Rump-in-the-Bowl, and withdrew to the darkest corner in the shop.

"On seeing the bandit the hag seemed suddenly to emerge from her state of apathy. She half rose up and said eagerly:

"'Well?'

"'It looks bad,' said the malefactor; 'it appears to be a wolf in sheep's clothing.'

"'How? is it not settled,' said the hag.

"'Settled indeed? nothing of the sort,' resumed the bandit. 'The captain has caught a tartar. It's I who tell you so.'

"'Then what are you come about?' said the old woman grumbling. 'What is the use of coming here?'

"'The captain recommends the governor to accept a third. Then there may be a chance.'

"'The governor is out, that's his business: he will write to the captain to-night,' replied the hag.

"'I will let him know,' said the Rump-in-the-Bowl.

"He then left the shop.

"On hearing the word *captain*, I guessed it was Bamboche, ever in connexion with the bandit. I strove also to divine what strange interests could bring together persons of so many different conditions into this dusky toy-shop, where no toys were bought or sold.

"All at once the old woman, pasting, so to speak, her withered face against the panes of the shop-window, cried out in a hollow voice:

"'Here comes the master.'

"Immediately the hunter and the chamber-maid stood up from their seats, and the young gentleman stepped aside from the glass-door where he had been looking out, apparently in order to dissemble his ill-humour.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TOYMAN TURNS OUT TO BE AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

"THE shop-door was opened.

"The declining day, and the darkness of the passage which added to the gloom, prevented me for some time from recognising the features of the toyman; besides he wore an old hat, deeply drawn over his head, and the collar of his snuff-coloured frock coat being raised, to protect him from the cold, concealed his ears and a portion of his face.

"In spite of the vexation he had testified, the stripling went up to the tradesman and spoke to him with a timid, anxious and almost supplicating obsequiousness:

"'How are you, my dear Mr. Bonin,' said he to him. 'I come about——' Here the tradesman, interrupting the youth, said to the hag rather testily:

"'Did n't you inform him, then, that it could not be done?'

"'I told him so again and again,' grunted the old woman, 'but he would stay.'

"Then he turned to the stripling, and said to him in a manner that could not be misunderstood:

"'Good night, young man.'

"Then he abruptly turned his back upon him.

"'But, Mr. Bonin,' resumed the youth imploringly, 'I entreat you—if you did but know—I will tell you the reason.'

"'Enough—enough,' cried Mr. Bonin; 'I have said no, and no I mean—good night.'

"'But, I conjure you, listen to me a moment.'

"'Go to bed, young man, and sleep upon it, and that will calm your blood,' said the toyman. 'Once for all, good night.'

"Then walking towards the chasseur, the toyman said to him:

"You come on the duke's account, I believe?'

"'Yes, sir; here is a letter from my master.'

"Just as the chasseur was delivering his message to Mr. Bonin, the stripling, goaded to madness by being humbled before witnesses, exclaimed:

"'Well! since this is your behaviour, I will expose you for a cheat as you are; I will tell them I had no thought of doing wrong, when I received a letter in which I was told that some person knowing that I had a rich father, offered to lend me money on my future inheritance—I will say——'

"'Psha, you will say what? That 's how all you young popinjays are,' resumed the toyman with a look of disdainful carelessness: 'they come and ask you to discount their *papa* or *mamma's* death, because they have not patience to wait for the bequest; and whenever an honest tradesman declines to favour their disorderly course, they come and insult them. It 's really pitiful.'

"'What! do you dare assert,' cried the youth, 'that you are the accomplice of that contraband captain who induced me to sign 4000 pounds' worth of blank bills of exchange, for which I was supposed to receive a lading of bears' hams and dry wood, a new patent for a balloon, a thousand bottles of Lachryma-Christi, and two thousand copies of an indecent work, a large quantity of rhubarb, thirty square miles of land in Texas, some Ostrich feathers, and a mortgage in the bey of Tunis, all air-blown imaginary articles, and estates, of which I never saw any thing but the empty titles, and all of which you brought up in the lump, for 13,300 francs.'

"At the enumeration of this strange motley valuables, the chasseur and the abigail burst into a loud laugh. I did not join in their hilarity; for at that time I was entirely ignorant of usurious loans.

"The youth did not seem to notice this impertinent glee; but his anger grew fearful, and he cried out to the tradesman—

"'I tell you again, that you are an accomplice of that rascally captain. You knew it so well, that you proposed to me an affair better in appearance, since instead of fictitious goods you spoke of cash, and this very day you were to deliver me 20,000 francs in exchange for a blank signature of mine—and yet you have the face to deny your promise.'

"'I tell you for the last time, young man, that I will never countenance your prodigality. Go to papa and mamma. Be a good boy, and make no more noise in my shop; if you do I must send Laridon for the police.'

"'Since it must be so,' cried the youth, exasperated, 'you shall hear from me with a vengeance.'

"'Whenever you like; I am quite in order,' said the toyman, composedly, whilst the youth retired slamming the door violently after him.

"'Simpleton,' said M. Bonin.

"Now he took the letter from the chasseur, and began to read it.

"The more I listened to M. Bonin's voice, so clear, shrill, and sardonic, the more I thought I recollected it. In vain I strove to distinguish the mans's features; I could not do so, thanks to his raised collar, his low drawn hat, and the increasing gloom which pervaded the shop.

"'You must tell the duke,' said the toyman to the chasseur after reading the letter, 'that I have no time to-day to examine the articles he speaks of, but he can bring or send them to-morrow evening, between seven and eight, which is my dinner-hour; I will then look at them and tell him their value.'

"'What—what?' resumed the chasseur, with the impertinent familiarity of a great man's lacquey, 'that 's not it: the duke expects you to go to him to-day.'

"'Well the duke won't see me; that 's all,' answered Mr. Bonin, with cool assurance; 'let him come here to-morrow at my dinner-hour, and I shall be at home.'

"'This really is very singular that a duke and a peer, the son of a Field-Marshal of the empire, is to be at your orders,' said the chasseur, offended in his self-conceit for his master.

"'Psha!' said the toyman, 'he must, however, take that trouble since he wants to borrow money on such trash as the sword and other frippery belonging to his father, the dear little nobleman! As for you, my lad, take my advice, if your young master owes you any wages, *get them paid*. He is nearly run out. And when the house cracks, the rats will run out; for they have good noses. Take your motto therefrom—good night.'

"'The chasseur really seemed to be struck by the apologue, and went out making a signal of intelligence to the pretty maid.

"Then she, in turn, handed a letter to the toyman, who said, as he read it—

"'This is something like;—your mistress is a good orderly woman, my girl: she is covetous,—avaricious, and thinks of the future; that 's the main point, after all:—and she is but eighteen!

and as beautiful as a star.—But then she knows by heart all your rich sons of high family; and she plays her cards well with them, as long as they are her admirers. Let us see what she has to say to me now.'

"So saying, M. Bonin opened the letter, which, as I afterwards learned, was in the following language. I have altered the abominable spelling, but not the candid simplicity of the style :—

"My good old Fellow,—

"The little marquis wishes to give me 60,000 francs' worth of diamonds; but he is not very rich just now. His steward expects to receive some payments between this and the next three or four months—*bonâ fide* payments;—I know it,—but three months is a long interim, and it is better to have a thing than to wait for it; and, besides, there is a very rich Russian, who has been spoken of to me. You understand, in fine, this would be a sort of *parting gift* from the marquis, and so I have told him I must have the diamonds directly, and that, as he had no ready money, I knew a party who would lend him 60,000 francs; but at 20 per cent. interest, paid in advance for six months.

"That party is—*myself!* but, for form's sake, you shall appear. I have ordered my broker to sell out 3,200 francs of my stock. You will commence with the little marquis, and ask him to give you a bill of exchange at six months, and you will be supposed to hand over the cash, which my notary will count out on receiving a line from you;—he is already informed. By that means I shall get the diamonds at once, and shall net a clear profit of fifteen per cent., and you a commission of five per cent. for your trouble.

"In case you should get scent of any sound profitable business, write and tell me. I have still got a matter of 100,000 francs to dispose of for about a year, for I still covet that delightful farm in Brie. It's a large toy; but sooner or later it must drop into my bag.

"Do n't forget to call, to-morrow morning, on the steward of the little marquis.

"Eternally yours,
"My good old Fellow,
"Malvina Chabancon.

"'And this little love is not more than eighteen!' cried the toy-man, when he had finished reading. 'What a mind! what a practical knowledge she has of business!'

"Then he said to the soubrette—

"'Tell your mistress I will do what she desires. She is one who pays you your wages punctually, I'll be bound—eh?'

"'I believe you, sir! I invest them with her. My mistress is safer than any notary.'

"Then the soubrette left the shop, and no doubt soon after joined the chasseur, who had probably not yet left the passage.

"By that time it was completely dark. The next moment the dazzling gas was turned on, and lighted up the passage and the inside of the toy-shop. The master took off his hat, and turned down the collar of his frock coat.

"I recognised my old tormentor, La Levrasse.

"A kind of retrospective fury made me shudder for a moment, especially when I had remarked the deep-indented scars of a gaping burn which extended from the forehead to the chin,—a burn no doubt resulting from the fire in the itinerant carriage kindled by Bamboche. The mountebank's face was still beardless, sickly pale, and sardonic. He did not look much older;—but instead of now wearing his hair turned back Chinese-fashion, he had it cut very close, like a brush, which, however, made no great alteration in his countenance. I could not help feeling a certain twitch as I presented Count Robert's letter: but yet I felt towards this assassin of my childhood no personal hatred, so to speak. What I experienced was a compound of disgust, loathing, contempt, and horror. I could have wished to have seen the pitiful wretch handed over to the penalties of justice; but I should have deemed it pollution in me had I practised on him those rude reprisals which my youth, my strength, and my natural spirit would have rendered so easy.

"Before the shop was lighted up, I had stood apart in the shade, within a kind of retreating shed, formed by the door-way of the back-shop; so that the mountebank toy-man-usurer had not till that moment been able to notice my presence; the consequence was, when he saw me he fell back a step, and said to the hag with surprise and vexation—

"'Where the devil does he come from? Was he there then? I thought, just now, that I was alone with *my friends!*'

"'What!' replied the old woman, 'did you not perceive him? I thought you kept him on purpose for the last.'

"The mountebank shrugged his shoulders and stamped, and said to me with a very searching glance—

"'Who are you?—Whence do you come?—What do you want?'

"'Sir,—I come to deliver you a letter from Count Robert de Mareuil.'

"At that name La Levrasse's face cleared up again;—a grin of satisfaction sat upon his mouth, and he said—

"'Give me the letter—I expected to receive it yesterday.'

"When he had read the letter, the contents of which appeared greatly to please him, he said to me with the greatest kindness:

"'My lad, you will tell Count Robert de Mareuil that I shall have the honour to wait upon him to-morrow morning about ten o'clock, according to his desire.'

"Then the mountebank very civilly opened the shop-door for me, repeating:

"'To-morrow at ten o'clock—do n't forget, my friend, I shall be with your master.'

"I left the usurer's shop with new and powerful subjects for reflection—concern, alarm, and curiosity; I was almost certain that the captain alluded to by the Rump-in-the-Bowl was the same man as the stripling considered to be the accomplice in the usurious loans set on foot by the toyman: in a word, that he was no other than Captain Bamboche.

"As for La Levrasse, whom I had discovered anew in M. Bonin—a fictitious toyman—I at length remembered that the old mountebank was really called Bonin, a name which sometimes had appeared in our bills, but which I had altogether forgotten. I was by no means astonished at the forbidden trade he exercised under the borrowed guise of a dealer in children's toys; not at that time, but only at a later period had I a perfect idea of this new villany. By what strange and fatal chance was it, after so many vicissitudes, that those three men had been brought together again—Bamboche, the Rump-in-the-Bowl, and La Levrasse?

"What common bond of interests had there been to extinguish the implacable hatred which they must ever feel towards each other? How had it been that Bamboche had abjured his vindictive feelings towards La Levrasse?

"I could not help feeling assured that Bamboche had been the instigator or the accomplice of many base and criminal deeds; and yet I did not feel my attachment to him decline. My friendship continued, but with it there was mixed up a kind of sorrowful pity, for I had witnessed the sincere and earnest desires of reformation which Bamboche had often manifested; a floating idea of hope still

whispered to me that my influence over that indomitable spirit might possibly be useful to him. My desire to see him again was most acute, but I had sufficient self-command not to attempt to effect a meeting with him before I had marked out the line of conduct I ought to pursue as related to those men and those things which seemed to me to bear upon the interests of Regina.

"On my return home, I reported to Count Robert the favourable answer returned by the toyman. He brightened up as he heard me, and his light-hearted friend Balthazar gave way to the loudest and most whimsical demonstrations of joy. He wanted absolutely to go that very night to the *Funambules* to decree an oration to Basquine, whom he admired on trust, for he had never seen her perform; but Count Robert, having reminded his friend that their evening was to be devoted to a graver matter, the poet sighed, and adjourned his intention.

"After their frugal meal, the broken relics of which fell to me, my masters informed me that it would be unnecessary for me to sit up for them, and advised me to go to bed,—adding, moreover, that they would call me up on their return in case they should require my services.

"Before he went out, Count Robert had ordered me to open his trunk and travelling-bag, and to set in order the contents of both.

"This job did not require much time, for it would not have been easy to find a more *scanty* or *worn out* wardrobe than his. The only article of luxury that I met with in that inventory was a handsome writing-desk, in Russian leather, with silver clasp and lock, the key of which was not in it.

"Whilst going and coming in that apartment, I noticed a thing which had not struck me before.

"I observed in the wainscot which divided my master's chamber from the little entry I was to sleep in, a round piece of new plaster about six inches in diameter, and three feet above the floor.

"It was evident the wall had been formerly opened to let in a stove-pipe (probably intended to warm the little ante-chamber I was to sleep in) which, bending in elbow form, retreated to the chimney of the adjoining chamber.

"Within that chamber, which my masters occupied, the paper on the wall concealed these repairs; but in my room no care had been taken to overlay them.

"Then there occurred to me a thought which, taken by itself, was blameworthy, I allow, but which was perhaps excusable when you consider the alarm—the increasing terror inspired in me by the singular connexions of Count Robert de Mareuil, and what I had been able to understand regarding his designs on the lovely Regina.

"By leaving untouched, in the adjoining room, the paper which overlaid and concealed the old passage of the funnel, but withdrawing on my own side the obstructive matter, I should secure an earhole so as not to lose a single word uttered by my masters, however low they might be conversing together. To make the opening of this new species of acoustic channel, I had only to take behind the sideboard a piece of the paper-hanging and fit it carefully over the hole.

"I paused awhile before I resolved on executing this unworthy action; I questioned myself severely, and inquired what motive I was obeying? What was the object I had? And finally whether any imperative necessity authorised the act?

"To these several question which I put to myself inwardly, and with perfect sincerity, I answered.

"The motive I obey is the most absolute devotion that can be inspired by a love equally passionate and respectful and disinterested—a love which must be, and shall be for ever unknown to her who inspires it.

"The good I have in view is to protect, to defend as much as my humble lot will allow me, a noble maiden who is menaced with danger.

"The necessity which obliges me to act as I do is imperative: I have no other means of ascertaining the real intentions of Count Robert; and besides, I take heaven to witness, if my suspicions are unfounded—if I perceive the rectitude of the young man's character—if his projects—if his hopes are shared in by the girl, however painful the resolution may be, I will prove as zealous in serving Count Robert's wishes, as I would have been hostile to them in the contrary case.

"Finally, and for the last probation, after inquiring of my soul and conscience whether my action would have been approved by Claude Gerard, to whose sanction I mentally referred all my actions, I made up my mind.

"In less than half an hour, an acoustic channel, perfectly secret, was effected between the two chambers. Sound then penetrated so distinctly, that having lighted a fire in my master's chamber, I could hear the slightest cracklings of the burning wood when the door was shut.

"This nefarious preparation being over, I awaited impatiently the return of the poet and Count Robert as I stretched myself along the bear-skin which Balthazar had so liberally consigned to my use; my head being turned towards the channel I had recently opened.*

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW COUNT ROBERT AND THE MERRY POET BALTHAZAR HOLD A SECRET CONVERSATION ABOUT REGINA WHICH IS NO SECRET TO MARTIN.

"AFTER an absence of two or three hours, Count Robert and Balthazar returned, passed rapidly through the ante-room I was sleeping in, or rather feigning to sleep and shut themselves up in the adjoining chamber. Almost immediately after, I heard the noise of a chair thrown violently down on the floor.

"Then setting my ear against the orifice of the channel close to my head, I overheard the following dialogue, which I afterwards remembered almost word for word, as I did every thing which related to Regina.

"'Come, come, Robert!' said the poet in a tone of affectionate chiding, 'be calm—take heart. Zounds! there's nothing yet to despair of.'

"'All is lost,' cried Robert de Mareuil, striding across the apartment, and muttering furious curses—

"'I tell you again, nothing is lost; since nothing has been done as yet,' resumed Balthazar; 'and what credit ought you to attach to such idle reports? Come, Robert, do n't be so selfish; you know I can't bear to see gloomy faces: and yet there you stand gnawing my very heart out with your grim looks.'

"After a momentary silence Count Robert resumed—

"'Stay, Balthazar, you are my only friend—all those I assisted and countenanced in happier times——'

* This employment of reason and argument to justify a misdeed is altogether inexcusable. Every law might be broken—every rule of conduct might be violated with impunity if we allowed the Jesuitical principle "that every action is admissible which serves to encompass an end which the offender himself desires to effect. Does our able logician, Eugene Sue, after throwing so many shells into the camp of the Jesuits, mean to adopt their secret code and become a second Ignatius? The fine elements of the English character must be smitten with the curse of Lear before such a principle could be admitted among us.—*Translator's note.*

"'When once the gale of adversity was come, took wing, and flew away—like your birds of passage at the approach of winter! Egad! does that surprise you?' said the poet; 'then what have you acquired by your long Parisian life? But forget it all—bygones are bygones, let us think only of the present, like two old schoolfellows.'

"'Yes,' replied Robert bitterly, 'now I return to you. As long as I was rich I left you alone, and deserted you for those ungrateful rascals!'

"'Stop a bit!' cried Balthazar. 'Let us distinguish—it was I who deserted you; when I saw you in full career. What a fine figure I should have cut in the world of fashion, with my 1200 francs a year, and my hydrophobia for poetry and study. But I did not forget you for all that: I saw you five or six times in your fine carriage. You swept along the Boulevard like a splendid meteor. I saluted you by waving my hand; and you, though so fine a meteor, would get out of your carriage to come and speak to me; that was intrepid, on your part, for I wore black worsted stockings, laced shoes, and a white hat all the year round. You must have felt it no honour to be speaking to me in such a plight—but——'

"'Balthazar?'

"'Confess the impeachment—I will do as much, and that is, that I was infinitely proud of being seen talking to a young fellow so elegant and buckish as yourself! but I was still unlucky, for never did it happen that a single friend among my *peers* in laced shoes caught sight of me speaking to you. Let us be serious: we have followed our fates: you have enjoyed yourself like a heathen god, whilst I have scribbled poetry by the ream, and here we meet again: I with a few thousand verses in stock, and you with some thousands of louis out of pocket, which makes us equal—with this difference, that for my part I am quite happy in my lot, for, thanks to my labour, I live eight or ten hours a day amidst the enchantments of fancy; the rest of my time *I live in hope*, nay in certainty, of some day or other swimming in the waters of Pactolus—I swear to do so by the Styx and by the heads of my devoted booksellers. So that for the present, 'tis I that am rich, happy, and crowned with fortune; and, zounds! I won't suffer you to grieve thus. This morning you were all fire and flame, and now you are become all ice and frost, and for what reason? for a piece of news which if genuine only amounts to this: that there is an obstacle in your path? Come, Robert, this is not like you.'

"'No, I own it,' resumed the Count dejectedly. 'Ah! misfortune makes us so distrustful.'

"'With so many gloomy thoughts,' cried the poet, 'where do you think you would be carried.'

"Then breaking off, he added in a serious and feeling voice which was unusual to him:

"'Listen to me, Robert. If I believed you capable of living moderately until the time when, thanks to your old connexions and some family interest, you might obtain a situation, I would say to you: Do n't let the future disturb you; share what I have—the excessively small pittance I live upon. In less than two months you will be settled in some snug berth with a nice little salary of some twelve or fifteen hundred francs—humble but safe—then I——'

"'Now it's your turn to listen, Balthazar,' said Robert, interrupting his friend. 'Brought up in luxury and idleness, I have contracted the habit of indulging every extravagant desire, every whim that prodigality could satisfy. I am ignorant, idle, and proud. I love wealth not merely for the sake of the delights it affords, but likewise for the enjoyments that pride and ostentation derives from it; in a word, I love as much to enjoy as to maintain *my rank*. Yes, for right or wrong, I think that a man of my birth should live differently from the rest—that he ought to represent and support his name splendidly; and that is why, as long as I was able, I led the life of a great noble. At present, I am ruined, riddled with debts; well, I tell you openly I am, and feel myself to be unable to gain my living by means of my labour. In the first place what should I be fit for?—none. And allowing even that fortune, or some powerful protector were to give me a post of fifteen thousand, instead of fifteen hundred francs, I presume——'

"'As if you meant the salary of a Prefect, a major-general, a bishop, or a privy councillor,' said Balthazar, interrupting his friend.

"'Well!—setting apart the sense of humiliation a man feels in holding *a place*,—that is to say, in submitting to a somebody's orders, what the deuce would you have me to do with 15,000 francs a year? I who have long since contracted the habit of living at the rate of 100,000 francs a year, at the lowest! what I now say may perhaps appear absurd to you, but yet it is true.'

"'I believe you, Robert; what the devil could you do with 15,000 francs a year? Seriously speaking, I consider you unable to live on less than an income of 60,000 livres at the lowest, and even then not without difficulty, and being very close: you have proved it once before most mathematically. I never shall forget your budget of estimates. I remember every item, and no wonder."

"'First,'—said you,—'a man cannot go a-foot; so we 'll say 10,000 francs for my stable. Secondly. As the ladies of high life require most expensive attention, I must look elsewhere for a mistress; and and the least we can give a wench that is tidy, is 1500 francs a month, besides presents. Thirdly. A man cannot dine at a tavern under thirty or forty francs, if he wish to be respected and well treated by the waiter. Now say fifty francs for a box-ticket to be sent to his mistress, which, with the daily *bouquet*, will give about 100 francs per diem. Then add thereto the rent of a neat comfortable apartment, the tailor, the unforeseen requirements, the suppers, little gifts to my fair friend, occurrences of infidelity, articles of fancy, the card table, bets at the races, and you will find that at the lowest figure, a man of a certain rank cannot live, unless he possesses from 80,000 to 100,000 francs a year, without taking into account another 100,000 francs to set up his establishment; and after all he must live single, and without a separate mansion.'

"'True,' said Count Robert sighing; "yes, I defy *any gentleman* to live in Paris for less if he would maintain his rank.'

"You are nearer the truth than you imagine, perhaps, Robert, when you say you cannot live for less; and I have quoted this budget to lay down more clearly the sum total of your wants. Now, in your case the superfluous is become so necessary by long use, that if you were once deprived of it——'

"'*I would blow out my brains*,' said Robert coolly.

"These were uttered by the Count in so resolute a tone, that I could not doubt their truth. The poet shared the conviction; for, after a pause he resumed in an altered voice:

"'Yes, I believe you,—you would kill yourself. Therefore, I was saying you cannot live under 60,000 francs. I understand it, though I live myself on twelve hundred. We must take our friends as they are: instead of being born blind or humpbacked, you have got the infirmity of *extravagance*,—that 's all. But I won't suffer you to be downhearted, because then you might not carry this match, and then out of despair you would certainly shoot yourself. Now I am resolved that you shall live, and marry Regina de Noirlieu. As for the obstacles to check you, why we 'll surmount them; and you shall have my assistance. Let us reconnoitre a bit. Let us consider our position, that of Regina, and the several *dramatis personæ*. That being once clearly understood, we can afterwards conceive the plot. You must look upon me as your colleague, and that we are putting our heads together to draw out the plan of a prime comedy, or, perhaps, of a drama. Let us first call out the names of the actors; we have but one woman in the piece up to this time,—that is *Regina de Noirlieu*, that 's all.'

"'That 's all,' repeated Robert.

"'Good. Now as to the men: first there is yourself *Robert de Mareuil;* then there is the *Baron de Noirlieu*, the father of the lady; then *Count Duriveau*—and——'

"'And the Prince of Montbar,' cried Robert bitterly; 'it was doubtless that cursed prince that Martin spoke about—for the prince is very young, very handsome, and often calls upon the baron.'

"This last speech from Count Robert justified my suspicions; I could now hardly doubt it; the stranger at the *Three Butts* tavern was called the Prince of Montbar.

"Balthazar resumed:

"'Are these all the characters in the play?'

"'Yes all; and plague upon them, they are too many,' answered the Count.

"With regard to the minor parts,' replied Balthazar, 'we forget our anti-Frontin. Stupid as he is, he may yet be useful to us. The information he gave you this morning set you on the scent of Duriveau and the Prince of Montbar, did it not?'

"'That 's true.'

"'So let us add, Martin, lacquey to Robert de Mareuil. The scene lies in Paris. Now let us throw a rapid glance at the prelude.'

"'Nonsense! have done with such folly,' cried Robert impatiently.

"'Folly! know then that I mean by *prelude* those events which were prior to the opening of the play. In other words, in order to have a clear view of the business, let us sum up briefly your previous position as regards Regina. Some of your communications to me go very far back; I may have forgotten some items: do you rectify my statements when my memory flags. I must know all, and I think as yet there are some things that I have not learned.'

"'There are,' replied Count Robert embarrassed.

"'You shall inform me of these new facts as I proceed. Now for our prelude. You were brought up with Regina, who is related to you. This early friendship has given place to a habit of intimacy between you, which as you grew older, turned into love. Is that it?' said the poet.

"'Yes, a tender and passionate love on my part,' replied Robert; 'but cold, serious, and reserved on the part of Regina.'

"'Good!—thus you attained your nineteenth, she her sixteenth, year,' continued Balthazar: 'you meet as frequently as your family ties allow, and your love continues to grow, promising, like two young innocents, to love each other to the last, and never to change.'

"'But on one condition,' said Robert.

"'What condition? you never mentioned that to me.'

"'Regina swore to me that she would be mine alone,' resumed Count Robert, 'but on condition of my one day avenging her mother's memory.'

"'What? avenge what?' inquired Balthazar more and more astonished, 'and how are you to avenge her?'

"'Regina did not explain herself more at full; at a future day she was to have explained her wish, but we were sundered by a rupture between our two families. Now this is what you don't know, Balthazar,' added Robert: 'At our final interview, Regina said to me:—'They are going to part us, but they cannot sunder our hearts. I have loved you, and I love you, Robert, because I have known you since our infancy, because I believe you possess a noble heart, a generous nature, and finally, because you have sworn to assist me one day to avenge and redress my mother's memory, cruelly slandered. Go then, Robert, since it must be. But I swear to you by the sacred remembrance of my mother, neither time nor space shall ever cause me to forget the solemn promise I now make you, never to be another's. The day that shall seem to me the fittest, I will bid you return, and I know you will hasten to obey the call.'

"'The language was pathetic, the promise formal,' said the poet greatly moved; 'and when we consider the steadfast, loyal, and lofty character of the young lady, we are sure she will not violate that pledge.'

"'Oh! she must not,' exclaimed Robert with a kind of bitter wrath, 'my future hopes are seated in that trust.'

"Balthazar remained silent for some moments.

"'What is the matter now?' said Count Robert to him.

"'Truly,' resumed the poet, in a voice which quivered as he spoke, 'Regina is a noble creature, but let us return to our prelude. The baron carries off his daughter to live on his estate, in the back part of the province of Berry. You soon forgot your first love, and faithful to the *budget* you had laid down, you squander right merrily the fortune left by your father. But every thing has an end as well as a beginning. Your fortune spent, your borrowings exhausted, you hear that Regina, thanks to an unexpected inheritance, has got a fortune of some three millions; you then recollect the formal promise of your first love. Now, tell me candidly: do you feel absolutely disengaged from all past and future affection for Regina? To play the game you have in hand requires a cool, steady head.—I might even say the inflexible selfishness of a man of business; for you must not shut your eyes to the fact that it is a matter of business, an excellent business, too, you are aiming to accomplish. If you succeed, I will tell you hereafter my personal opinion about it.'

"'How?' exclaimed Robert; 'explain your meaning.'

"'We are now speaking dramatically, and not morally—excuse the expression. A difficult position, almost a hopeless one, is yours; and the characters being quoted we are now trying to find the means of happily unfolding the plot. In all this you are aiming, I repeat it, to accomplish an excellent piece of business; whilst I am trying to construct the plot of a new play. So there is no question here of morality.'

"'Do you think I am acting unfairly?' cried Robert.

"'Pooh—pooh! you are ruined—overwhelmed with debts. A young lady, rich and beautiful, has promised to be yours: you come to claim her plighted troth. Take a hundred men, and ninety-nine of them would act like you: so be easy. In a worldly point of view, you are pure—spotless, as the Paschal lamb.'

"'But in your opinion?'

"'In mine?'

"'Yes.'

"'How inquisitive you are!'

"'Be candid; you would not act as I am doing, Balthazar?'

"'Perhaps.'

"'You condemn me?'

"'But I assist you; because in your case, I am aware it is a matter of life or death,' said Balthazar, gravely.

"'You condemn me, and yet you assist me; wherefore this inconsistency?'

"'Inconsistency!' exclaimed the poet, resuming his good humour: 'far from it; it's a natural harmony—a perfect fusion of ideas. When I blame you, I obey my private opinion;—when I assist you, I espouse the common mode of thinking.'

"'Eternally whimsical.'

"'How can I help it, Robert? a poet is so singular a being.'

"Although this protest was only a passive one, I felt grateful to Balthazar for having so far objected to Count Robert's projects. I listened to their after conversation with increased anxiety.

"'Let us proceed with the development of our plot,' answered the poet. 'As soon as you had heard of the unexpected bequest which had devolved on Regina, you likewise ascertained that she was very unhappy at her father's; for, as they allege, she is not his daughter. The baron broods over this fact; and in spite of the number of years that have elapsed since the untoward event, it is so present to his mind that his reason has been affected by his sullen misanthropy, which must render the young lady's situation intolerable, especially since the baron has brought her back to Paris. All these things seem to have been expressly managed by your lucky stars. A girl when worried is half-prepared to elope; now, you purpose to carry off Regina, as you are aware that her father, for many reasons, would never give her hand to you. This plan of elopement is not irrational; for you hold the pledge of this high-minded damsel; still she has not yet said: *come*. But never mind—you come without, in order to anticipate her wishes: and therefore it is that you have arrived in Paris to lay siege to Regina and her three millions. Thus did matters stand with us this morning at noon. This evening a new incident occurred to complete the prelude: you learned almost from a certain source, that you have two rivals: one, accepted by the baron, Count Duriveau, a widower,—a wealthy, newly-varnished upstart;—the other pretender, accepted they say, by Regina, who must in that case have forgotten her oath to you, and this suitor is the Prince of Montbar, a young man of five and twenty, as handsome as Alcibiades—as noble as a Montmorency—an elegant, lively, and rather rich young fellow. I don't think I have omitted any thing—have I?'

"'No, nothing,' returned Robert.

"'As for those matters with which I am still unacquainted,—reflect awhile and see whether you can impart them to me.'

"After a moment's pause, Count Robert resumed with partial embarrassment—

"'This morning I told you that I had just come up from Britany, from the castle of the Marquis of Kerouard, at whose place I had been hiding from my creditors.'

"'Yes—you did.'

"'This morning, Balthazar, I was released from

the debtors' prison, where I had been shut up since January.'

"'You—in prison—and never let me know it," muttered the poet, reproachfully.

"'I wanted, as far as possible, to keep the matter close; and I believe I have succeeded. I was arrested on returning after a short trip of a few days, which I had undertaken to delude my creditors.'

"'But your debts are of large amount,' said Balthazar, 'who has settled them for you?'

"'They are still unpaid.'

"'Then who released you?

"'My creditors.'

"'The devil they did!'

"'Nay more, they have even afforded me the means of another loan from the toyman I wrote to this morning.'

"'Prodigious! marvellous! sublime!'

"'The simplest thing in the world: I have convinced my creditors that they would gain nothing by detaining me in custody; whilst by setting me at large, and even obtaining for me some needful supplies, they would enable me to effect a rich marriage that I contemplated.'

"'I understand.'

"'Of course they required security. So I renewed before I was set at large all my bills at three months date. I am closely watched. If the marriage comes off, they will get their money; if not——But why argue that point? in that case, my resolution is fixed.'

"'Now that I know all that you venture, and all that you have suffered,' cried the poet, 'I tell you that if, as I expect, you marry that noble girl, you cannot fail to love and to adore her, were it merely out of gratitude.'

"'I think so too. She will have rescued me from so desperate a situation; but at present I am too much tormented and harassed to think of love.'

"'I admire your candour, and fully believe you. My devotion to you is increased by your sincerity. Matters thus clearly understood, the first thing you have to do is to see Regina. It is impossible she can have listened to the suit of Duriveau. Nor is it likely she can have authorised that of the Prince. She has taken an oath to you—that oath is still binding, since you have not let her off; and a girl like that would never perjure herself.'

"'The only thing I fear is that the report of my extravagance and my ruin, perhaps even that of my imprisonment, may have reached her.'

"'If Regina loves you, what does it signify?' said Balthazar to Count Robert. 'Love is indulgent, and then it was to divert your mind from the thoughts of your cruel separation, that you plunged headlong into the vortex of dissipation. Once for all, if she still loves you, the rest is of no consequence.'

"'To-morrow at all events, I shall know my fate.

"'To-morrow?'

"'Is she not going to the Museum with her father and Count Duriveau? Let me only catch Regina's look, and I shall know the truth. Proud and open as she is, she cannot dissemble. I know her; the impression of her countenance will tell me every thing.'

"'You are right. Before concerting any measures, we must wait for the result of to-morrow's meeting.'

"'And if my hopes are deceived,' exclaimed Robert. 'But no—no,' said he; and then I heard him again push back his chair with violence, whilst he got up and walked about the room in a state of excitement. 'No, at the mere thought, my heart is racked with the tortures of hell.'

"'Come, Robert, be appeased,' said Balthazar; 'you really terrify me, your face is white, your eyes bloodshot. Come to the window and breathe a little fresh air: this chamber is so small, it almost suffocates us. Come, compose yourself. You are quite nervous to-night.'

"Here I heard the window opened and Robert say to Balthazar:

"'You are right; my head is quite scorching; the fresh air will do me good. And then I will tell you calmly, but resolutely, that if Regina deceive my expectations, I have determined to——'

"Count Robert's voice gradually sinking, as he walked up to the window, I could not possibly hear the close of the sentence.

"Only a few moments later, Balthazar's voice became suddenly audible, no longer tremulous through affection but firm, severe, and almost angry.

"'I won't believe it,' said he, 'I won't believe it.'

"'Listen to me, Balthazar.'

"'I tell you, Robert, you are slandering yourself, for you are incapable of so black a deed. The most shameful treachery on her part would not justify you.'

"'But remember to what extremity I should be reduced?' cried Robert. 'Do you forget my position?'

"'So far am I from forgetting it, Robert, that it serves to suppress in me certain scruples of which I will say nothing, and that's a great deal; but beyond that——Never! In spite of my friendship for you, or in spite of my devotion, I would never see you again, if——'

"Here Count Robert interrupted the poet with a forced laugh, which to me appeared almost convulsive, and exclaimed with assumed gaiety equally fictitious:

"'What, you green credulous dramatic poet, ingenious nursling of the Muses, don't you remember that just now you told me yourself it's the plot of a first-rate comedy, and possibly of a drama that we have to cast! Well! I only wanted to show you that I could contrive a dramatic scene likewise, and you have been my dupe, and seriously believed I could be so rascally. Come now, Balthazar, I should really be disposed to quarrel, were we not such long tried friends.'

"'Whilst he was speaking, his accent became so natural and convincing, that I was inclined to believe him sincere. Balthazar, for his part, did not suspect him a moment, for he exclaimed, in a voice half joyous, half angry:

"'The devil take you, Robert, or rather the devil take me; for, after all, it was I who was dull enough to believe you capable of an atrocity. You were making game of me, and you were right. But come! it grows late; our prelude is clearly exposed: we have got all our characters. To-morrow we'll begin the action.'

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"It was a strange thing: although Balthazar, when once hurried away by his capricious imaginings, would indulge in the most extravagant dreams with his eyes open, yet whenever he trod the paths of practical life, he was not only good and generous, but sensible to boot; he no longer offered his friend that Potasi, those golden rivers, those galleons and other fantastical remunerations which he expected from his works, and which he subsequently did receive; but he offered his friend all he could really dispose of: his humble lodging, his bread and his most fertile fancy. I had also seen with the deepest satisfaction, that in spite of his lively friendship for Robert, the poet set severe bounds to his devotion; I thought him all the less capable of becoming an accomplice in a foul misdeed against Regina, that he did not concur without some scruple in Count Robert's conjugal design. The cold and resolute manner in which the latter had spoken of his project of suicide had convinced me of his sincerity·

I confess it, if I felt a kind of pity for that man, it was devoid of all interest or sympathy. That inertness, that cowardly resignation which induced him to prefer death to labour, without having made one trial, that detestable acknowledgment that life was not conceivable to him with 15,000 francs a year, that insolent arrogance so unhappily genuine that he could not accept of life without a large fortune,—all this, I repeat, had excited my disgust, contempt, and indignation.

"But recollecting soon after the maxims of Claude Gerard—maxims so full of benevolence and wisdom, I thought of the education which Count Robert had received, of which education the scene in the forest of Chantilly had formerly given me a specimen. I thought of the inevitable fatality lurking in this idea so common among all those who owe, neither to their toil nor to their understanding, the gift of fortune.

"*I was not born to labour; my father is rich—I am rich—I must keep up my dignity.*

"Finally, I reflected on that incurable leprosy of idleness, of that habit of luxury, of those *necessary* superfluities of life which in a manner change our nature, by almost creating, as it seems, new senses and new organs as imperative as the rest.

"Then I began to pity Count Robert most sincerely, not for being what he was, but for having been fatally conducted, by one of the most deadly consequences of inheritance—AN IDLE YOUTH—to that extreme of cowardice, impotence, and depravity.

"This once again, I was conscious of the fact—frequently the abuse of riches brutifies and depraves a man fully as much as the most wretched poverty; and we owe those victims of excessive wealth, not indeed the tender compassion—the holy sympathy, inspired by the most scandalous privation, but that kind of grievous pity suggested, as Claude Gerard used to say, by the lot of those infirm wretches, whose blood is infected by some hereditary vice.

"I allowed myself the more freely to glide into these feelings of equitable pity, that I was afraid of unwittingly yielding to the influence of jealous animosity towards Count Robert, for he had been loved—he was, perhaps, still loved by Regina.

"Loved by that young girl, whose rare and admirable virtue I respected still more, after the conversation I had just overheard.

"And that marriage too was a possible event. Regina, faithful to the vows of her first affection, blinded by her confidence in a man she believed to be worthy of her, ill-treated in her father's house, and relying to find in Robert a generous, devoted supporter, who would assist her in restoring her mother's good name, Regina might—and ought, perhaps, to crown the wishes of Count Robert.

"One single chance was against him—Regina had not said: '*Come.*'

"Was it on the maiden's part a necessary postponement? or forgetfulness? or want of good faith? or newly acquired knowledge of Robert's character? or submission to her father's will, which favoured Count Duriveau? or, in fine, a new passion for the Prince of Montbar?

"In the midst of these perplexing doubts, my fears changed their object, but without losing any of their intensity. What a choice for Regina among the three men—Robert de Marcuil, Count Duriveau, or the Prince of Montbar,—if the latter, as I presumed, were the stranger I had met at the tavern of the *Three Butts*.

"Perhaps, however, I was mistaken with regard to the latter. This error was the only happy chance remaining for Regina, and God knows I desired it for her with all my soul. To know that she was happy, and beloved by a husband worthy of her, would have been, in my own hopeless love, my greatest consolation.

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"Harassed by fatigue, and wearied in mind by the many strange events of that day, I followed the example of my masters.

"Several violent pulls of the bell made me start up out of my sleep.

"It was broad day-light. I went directly to the door, and let in a tailor carrying a large bundle of ready-made clothes; the Count had probably ordered them the previous day. It was a poor resource for a young man accustomed to all the minutiæ of a finished toilet; but there was no time to be lost. Count Robert's vestments were so shabby, so threadbare and worn out, that it was still preferable, in his case, to appear before Regina on that very day, decently attired at least.

"As for the rest, such was the distinguished mien, the grace, and native elegance of Robert, that in spite of the old fashion of the garb, he appeared to be dressed in the best taste. To my great astonishment, I saw that my masters had not forgotten me; the tailor drew out a frock-coat of blue livery, with a red collar and silver buttons, a red plush waistcoat, a brown pair of breeches, and gaiters. I was at once enjoined to lay aside my poor garb of a ticket-porter to put on this new livery, which fitted my shape pretty well.

"I felt a cruel pang—a most painful pressure on my heart when, for the first time I assumed these symbols of servitude; I even hesitated a moment; but when I reflected on the services I might render Regina in my humble situation, and when I called to mind that maxim of the schoolmaster's—'that there is no state of life which an honest man cannot dignify,'—and when I said to myself, 'that my scruples might give rise to suspicion in the minds of my masters,' I felt unwilling to cut asunder the one only, slender tie, which connected me with Regina.

"'Now you are nearly the thing, Martin,' said Count Robert to me, scanning me from head to foot. 'Don't look so stiff—loosen your limbs; don't glue your arms to your body, or you will be putting us to the blush; but above all, take particular care of your old clothes as a messenger; they may be useful on certain occasions when your livery might be rather too conspicuous.'

"'This is not amiss,' said Balthazar, considering me in his turn; 'I should have better liked a cocked-hat, and light blue breeches, with silver garters, white silk-stockings, buckles in your shoes, &c. That would have been something splashing, but it would also have been too Frontin for you, my good lad. This decent city attire will preserve your simplicity, which I rate so highly, Martin. Besides, the livery you are one day to put on, is my own invention. I had ordered a hundred suits of that kind to clothe my people at the inauguration of my palace. But that unlucky Friday upset all.'

"A slight tingle of the bell here interrupted the poet's volubility. The tailor had already withdrawn. I closed the door of the inner room, and opened the outer one.

"It was La Levrasse.

"'The Count of Marcuil?' he said, in a soft, soothing voice; at the same time, as I thought, casting a hasty glance about the ante-chamber.

"'He lives here, sir,' answered I. 'If you will wait a moment, I will go and apprise him of your visit.'

"And, leaving La Levrasse alone, I entered the inner apartment.

"'It's the toyman,' said I to my masters.

"'He has kept his promise; a good omen—an excellent omen,' whispered the poet.

"Far from partaking in the lively hopes which the arrival of La Levrasse had excited in the poet, Robert appeared uneasy and pensive; and, to Balthazar's great surprise, he said to him, with a degree of constraint:—

"'My friend, leave me alone with this man.'

"'Alone—with the toyman?' said Balthazar.

"'Yes.

"'How very odd! You never said so till now.'

"'My friend, if I request you to withdraw,' resumed Count Robert, 'it is because I am bound to secresy.'

"'Very good, Robert, very good,' said the poet, disappointed. 'After all, a spice of mystery does no harm to a drama; so let there be mystery.'

"'Are these writing materials?' added Robert.

"'You mean signing materials,' replied the poet, smiling. 'Yes—there is the cup and the pen. Come with me, Martin.'

"We went out; La Levrasse went in to the Count. I shut the door upon those two personages.

"'Why the devil does Robert send me away?' said the poet, speaking to himself, as soon as he and I were alone in the entry or ante-chamber.

"Then Balthazar began to walk up and down in silence; whilst, no less curious than himself to know what was passing in the chamber, I busied myself in setting a few clothes in order, to assume another look. A table which I had purposely put before the acoustic channel, served to cover it up completely, so that nothing could be heard that was said between Count Robert and La Levrasse.

"Nevertheless, whilst coming and going, Balthazar had several times approached the door of the inner room, and appeared to be a prey to a keen feeling of curiosity.

"Suddenly the deep silence which till then had continued was broken by the following words, uttered by Count Robert, in a loud, angry voice:—

"'Scoundrel!'

"At this exclamation, after which perfect stillness returned, Balthazar put his hand on the key in the door; he, probably, meant to go in, but reflecting, I presume, on his friend's recommendations, he desisted, and renewed his strides to and fro.

"'Umph!' muttered he, 'the thing looks bad; and yet Robert thought there would be no difficulty. That old fellow, methinks, has a very ill-looking phiz.'

"Then, turning about to me—

"'Don't you think he has, my lad, a very ill-looking face? You must have had plenty of time to see him yesterday.'

"'Whom, sir?'

"'The toyman.'

"'Nay, sir, I did not much notice him.'

"At that moment the door was opened, the Count put out his head, and said:—

"'Balthazar, you may come in again.'

"The poet went in.

"I remained alone, and was much struck with the paleness of Robert's countenance and its sullen expression; but in a moment Balthazar came out, with a radiant look, and an eye glistening with joy. He gave me some silver, saying:—

"'Go directly to the tobacconist's in this street, and ask him for five stamps of ten thousand francs each, which makes fifty thousand francs in all—you understand?'

"'Fifty thousand francs!' repeated I, staring. 'With what, sir, am I to pay for them?' cried I, gaping with wonder.

"'How? what with? why, with the money I have just given you, to be sure.'

"'With this, sir?' said I. 'Can I pay fifty thousand francs with this?'

"'Oh! innocence of the golden age! O antique simplicity!' exclaimed Balthazar. 'O Martin! were it not for the seriousness of the case, I would carry you myself in triumph round the room, and keep singing your praise in chorus, but time is wanting. Make haste, run to the tobacco shop, and ask for five stamps of ten thousand francs each, pay for them, and come back.'

"Perplexed and confounded as I was, I hastened down stairs, and ran off to the shop. The owner was a little old man, with a sharp, piercing eye and a canting smile.

"'Sir,' said I to him, 'I wish to have five stamps for ten thousand francs each.'

"'Oh, oh!' said the tradesman, looking in a dirty card-box, and taking out a bundle of those papers which I fancied so valuable.

"'Oh, oh!' repeated he, 'it seems we are doing business with some large fund-holder. This is a fellow whose hand is no light one. 'Fifty thousand francs! they make paper as if it rained from the clouds. But, psha!' he added, in a gentle tone, 'it belongs to their age.' Then, looking at my new livery, he said to me, jocosely:—

"'I'd bet any thing your master is a young man.'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'I was certain of it,' said the tradesman; 'for in most cases it 's on this kind of paper that young people practise commercial writing. They fill up many copy-books with it. Alas! what a waste of paper,' continued he, with a grin, as he returned me my change.

"I did not at that time very closely understand his epigrammatic allusion, but I returned with all speed to my master.

"Balthazar was waiting for me in the middle of the staircase.

"'Here they are, sir.'

"'Good. Now run off to the Rue Grange Bateliere, where there is a livery stable. You will hire a curricle—a fine English one, mind, for twelve o'clock.' Never mind the expense; but let the carriage be here by twelve;—you understand?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"And off I set again. My livery had a good effect with the proprietor; he showed me a very handsome turn out, which I accepted, and then went home to my masters.

"La Levrasse was gone, Balthazar was more radiant than ever, but Robert appeared to me to be thoughtful.

"'Is there a money-changer in this street?' inquired the poet, addressing himself to me.

"'Yes, sir,' replied I, 'there is a clock-maker, who changes money.'

"'Then run and change this thousand franc note for fifty pieces of gold. You will pay the discount,' said the poet.

Then, giving me the note—

"'Hold it fast in your hand, and keep your hand shut, and return with the gold in a single rouleau. Make haste, for the time approaches, and we must be at the Louvre before one.'

"I went out and changed the note, and returned with the rouleau to Balthazar, who tore it open, counted the pieces, held them for a moment up in his hand to the light, then presented them to Robert, who said to him:—

"'Well, help yourself, man.'

"'What?'

"'Zounds! take what you like out of these fifty louis.'

"'Thank you, Robert.'

"'What, are you mad? Is there not plenty for us now?'

"'My worthy Robert,' said the poet, with gentle firmness, 'all shall be in common between us, except the money from that man.'

"'What a singular whim!'

"'Go, go,' exclaimed Balthazar, no longer gravely, this time, but resuming the current of his wild imaginings: 'do you think I need your gold? Are not those rascally booksellers about to send me the price of my works in sandal-wood boxes, borne on the shoulders of negroes?'

"Then, as it was striking twelve by the little chimney clock—

"'To your carriage,' exclaimed the poet to his

friend, 'quick, to your carriage. You must be beforehand with them, and reach the Louvre before Regina.'

"'So, then, you won't accompany me?' said Robert to the poet.

"'All things considered, I will not. It is better you should be alone. I might disturb her attention. You will find me here on your return;—I sha n't stir out. Make haste back; and do n't forget you are leaving me on the gridiron, Robert—on the gridiron of curiosity. Come, farewell, and good luck to you.'

"'Good-bye for the present,' said Robert.

"And as I opened the door to let him out—

"'Well, where's your hat?' said Balthazar to me.

"'What for, sir?'

"'Come, do you think, then, you are going to get up behind the carriage bare-headed? People would think you had made a vow to the virgin.'

"'Get up behind the carriage?' said I to him, nowise delighted at this new consequence to my extemporaneous domesticity.

"Unless you prefer getting inside,' said Robert to me, with a shrug. 'Come, take up your hat, and follow me.'

"I obeyed;—I opened the carriage door, and then got up behind the curricle, which drove off rapidly towards the Louvre.

CHAPTER XIV.

COUNT ROBERT GOES TO THE MUSEUM OF THE LOUVRE TO SEE REGINA, AND MARTIN SEES SOME GENTLEMEN'S GENTLEMEN.

"A LARGE number of carriages already thronged the approaches to the Louvre, when my master alighted at the grand entrance to the Museum.

"'You will follow the coach,' said Count Robert to me; 'observe very carefully where the coachman takes up his stand, and then return to this trance and wait for me.'

"'Yes, sir,' I replied.

"'After shutting the carriage door, I obeyed Count Robert's orders, and returned to take my place near the entrance, amidst a large crowd of servants.

"This first public trial of my condition, so to speak, was at first very painful to me. Count Robert's behaviour to me was harsh, contemptuous; but I soon drew out a sort of comfort from these reflections: that in the first place I had accepted this humble condition solely in the hope of being useful to Regina; then, that I had some moral superiority over my new master, Count Robert de Marcuil.

"Whilst thus reflecting, but without pride, I was conscious that I possessed feelings of rectitude, honour, and delicacy, to which the Count had ever been a stranger, as far at least as I could judge by what I knew of his conduct. I had known suffering, and had withstood misfortunes, the mere thought of which would have terrified him; certainly, in a state so desperate as mine had frequently been, either he would have destroyed himself, or descended into crime.

"This superiority over him once established by a reflective comparison, my state of servitude no longer humbled me. I could not better express what I felt than by comparing myself to a man of courage, endowed with great physical strength and great resolution, who, in order to fulfil some sacred duty, should endure the contempt or the threats of some pitiful fellow, cowardly and weak, whom he might throw down with a puff of his breath.

"In a word, our parts appeared to me entirely subverted; I considered my subaltern rank with respect to the Count as a singularity; I resigned myself to my situation as to a state both whimsical and mysterious, which not only could enable me to do a generous action, but which afforded ample room for my observations and inquiries.

"Lost and undistinguished among a host of servants, at the grand entrance, I listened attentively, for already was I indebted to my state of servitude for information far too precious not to hope to obtain still more.

"By mixing here and there among the various groups or knots of servants, I remarked that after the example of their masters, they divided themselves into the aristocratic and citizen classes: the footmen of noble houses, easily distinguished by their lofty stature, the crested buttons of their liveries, and the light coat of powder which covered their hair, constituted a group widely different from the lacqueys of the citizens, to whom they never spoke, not perhaps through any feeling of disdain, but as a consequence of their *social connexion*. The masters of these men frequented the same parties of fashion, and the servants met together every night, like their masters, in a few select houses, which together with certain embassies (as I afterwards learned) formed the fashionable haunts of the flower of Parisian Aristocracy. The connexions of the *bourgeoisie* being, on the other hand, largely divided and disseminated, their domestics, not meeting together in the same circles, did not amalgamate into one compact group like the lacqueys of the great nobility.

"It was towards this last group that I advanced, hoping to learn some tidings of the stranger whom I took to be the Prince of Montbar.

"After I had spent a quarter of an hour in thus listening (for my comrades did not speak very low), I was almost frightened by the intelligence I had gleaned as to Parisian high life: intrigues of love, family quarrels, divisions of interest, nothing seemed unknown to my aristocratic companions; and yet the nature of their service confining them to the hall or to their stand behind the carriage, precluded them from being eye-witnesses to that constant and perfect intimacy of the family hearth, which the valets-de-chambre are privy to.

"This conversation in broken patches, which I had just overheard, the facts therein revealed to me struck me so forcibly, for several reasons, that I have preserved it almost entirely in my recollection.

"'What! here you are at the Louvre,' said one of the aristocratic lacqueys to a comrade; 'yesterday at the opera you told me that *you* were going to the races in the Bois de Boulogne.'

"'True; but the order of our course is changed. We went, after the opera, to the Sardinian Embassy, and there it was they changed their minds, and made an appointment to meet here—no doubt.'

"'So then he went last night to the embassy?'

"'Of course; since we were going there, *he was there*. But he vanished the moment we arrived. I suspect he grows precious tired of us: the fact is my lady is deucedly on the wane.'

"'I saw her yesterday at the Duchess of Beaupréau's. Your mistress, my dear fellow, has quite run her course.'

"'What's to be done? She 's fair: and then her chagrin; for SHE seems to be dying for him, whilst HE—not at all. Formerly HE used to come before SHE did, and left at the same time, helping her on with her cloak, calling out for her servants when she came alone. But now, HE arrives the last and goes away the first. Besides it used to be visits of two or three hours every morning. Now it is upwards of five days since he has set his foot in the hotel.'

"'It 's all up with your mistress, my lad.'

"'So I think, too. Look, this very day, SHE expected to meet him here; I can't see anywhere his

cab and dashing grey horse, which every body turns to look at.'

"'The cunning fellow must have told her he was coming to the Museum to prevent HER from meeting him in the Bois, where HE must be gone. I tell you the Viscountess is done for. But stay, there she is coming out already; run and fetch the carriage.'

"'True, HE is not come; she is tired of waiting, and is going off. Peter, good bye.'

"'Good bye, old fellow.'

"Then, turning round to some of his comrades who had been present during the foregoing dialogue, the footman added:

"'Look at the ninny of a husband: is n't he like a turkey-cock?'

"'Such a Jocrisse!'

"'What a long lathy fellow!'

"'Never mind, she is pretty still.'

"'What a pouting face!'

"'The truth is SHE does look angry.'

"I turned to look at the spot which my neighbours indicated by their own looks, and on the steps leading to the grand entrance I perceived a fair young woman, whose features were partially jaded, but still lovely; she appeared deeply dejected. She was most elegantly and tastefully dressed. At intervals she looked out over the square with an air of deeply wounded feelings; the person she expected was not coming. A tall young man, with a dull stupid aspect, probably her husband, had given her his arm, with a look of tedious disregard. During the short space that elapsed whilst they were awaiting their equipage, the husband and wife did not exchange a single word.

"I felt a painful shock on beholding this young and lovely woman who, unconscious of the indecent and scandalous speeches her presence had elicited, was standing in thoughtful and moody sorrow on those steps as upon a pillory, and I was amazed to think that what to me appeared to require the closest and most mysterious cover—*the secret of a woman's heart*—was yet so easily seen into, and delivered up to the coarsest and most scurrillous jests of the ante-chamber. I could not for the world conceive how it happened that such brutal banter never reached the ear either of the lady, of the lover, or the husband; and I could not help wondering at that singular union of insolent raillery and profound discretion.

"All at once I started with surprise: a very fine green curricle, with servants in green and orange liveries, had just drawn up to the spacious steps; and out of that carriage I saw spring lightly to the ground my stranger of the *Three Butts*. I was the more at liberty to see and recognise him, that he stopped to speak to the fair-haired lady, whom probably he knew, shook hands with her and with her husband, and stood for some moments to converse with them.

"If the noble carriage, the singular beauty of that stranger, had struck me before, in his mean attire, and when I saw him intoxicated in a low tavern, that deportment and beauty appeared to me still more remarkable now when he was elegantly and fashionably dressed; his countenance, whilst speaking to that unhappy lady, was replete with grace, delicacy, and attraction; and I admired with what exquisite courtesy he conducted the forlorn fair one to her carriage at the foot of the grand flight, after which he flew speedily up the steps, and entered the Louvre with looks of the most eager impatience.

"At length I was about to ascertain the name of that young man; I had noticed the livery of his attendants, and I soon saw his own footman making up to the group among whom I was standing.

"'Sir,' said I to the fine tall fellow, 'that handsome green carriage behind which you stood just now belongs to the Prince of Montbar does it not?'

"'Yes, simpleton,' replied the colossus, after scanning my plain livery with disdain, and not seeming to relish the freedom I had shown in speaking to him.

"Far too much rejoiced at the information I had just obtained, to mind the epithet he had applied to me, I walked away from my pompous *brother*.

"I could no longer doubt that the stranger was the Prince of Montbar, who was probably come to the Museum to meet Regina. The latter had certainly arrived, for I had already discovered the livery of Count Duriveau, who was to have escorted Regina and her father to the Louvre. But desiring to certify the point as much as possible, I went up to the group where I perceived two footmen in brown liveries, with blue collar and laced with silver. The conversation on that side was very lively.

"'I tell you, our people are going to the dogs,' said a lacquey in blue, with yellow collar. 'Yesterday again, in spite of orders not to admit them, the tailor and the butcher, who had received nothing for a year that he has refused to supply us, forced their way in, met the governor on the grand staircase, and rated him so loud—so loud that we heard them in the kitchen.'

"'Leave the tailor unpaid; that may be done in case of need,' said a second valet, sententiously; 'but not pay the butcher, that 's disgusting: it shows a man is going down; you must not stay there my lad.'

"'Not to speak of the bills the marquis gave Hubert, his coachman, for the fodder he had supplied to the stables. The day before yesterday, it was the dressmaker who made a row on taking back a ball dress, which she declined to leave with my lady without the ready money. Every day there is some disturbance; people believe us to be rich. With our grand fussy display, who could suspect the truth?'

"'It 's the same story with us,' said a chasseur whom I remembered to be the same I had met in the toy-shop: 'the Duks has consumed every thing, and is going to pawn his father's sword and ornaments with a usurer.'

"'Get away, my lads, get away from such places.'

"'But my wages?' said one; 'they owe me for five months.'

"'Then stay another month, and you will lose six months instead of five. Stop, here are the footmen to Count Duriveau, if you could but push your way there, that 's a house as tight and solid as a new bridge.'

"'Then stepping towards one of Count Duriveau's servants, one of the speakers cried out:

"'Good day to you, Augustus.'

"'Good day, old fellow.'

"'I say, is there any vacancy for a footman, at your place, for a friend of mine?'

"'Not with us, but I think there is one in the ante-chamber of the Viscount.'

"'Your master's son?'

"'Yes.'

"'A little urchin like that to have an ante-chamber?'

"Do n't mention it, for it makes one sweat; but so it is: he has a complete establishment, and is attended by a *valet-de-chambre*, and two footmen; he has his own carriage, and goes out whenever he likes with his tutor and his comrades. What a merry dog is that tutor. Would you believe it, he is to take the Viscount, this very evening, to the Funambules: James hired the box this morning. Nay, the Count himself may go too. The little Viscount is in good hands, I assure you! He has already been brought home drunk two or three times.'

"'A good beginning, truly.'

"'Then he 's so pert, frappish, and malignant. But never mind, I shall never forget the dance they

led him once, some years ago, in the forest of Chantilly; it was a set of beggars he had *worried* with his foolish tricks; and who were nicely revenged, for they dragged him away into the wood, and had it not been for a patrol of *gendarmes* there is no saying what might have been the end of it.

"'That was serving him right.'

"'That was not all. Miss Regina de Noirlieu, whom we have this day brought to the museum with the Count, was along with him, and was carried off at the same time by those little rascals. She was then about nine years old. I shall never forget it. What a funny go it was!'

"Regina was at the Louvre; I continued to listen, hoping to hear more.

"'Umph!' uttered the lacquey, who was seeking to get a place for his comrade: 'it must be no joke to serve such a little plague?'

"'Psha! a man soon gets used to it. Besides there 's not much to do, as he keeps two servants in his ante-chamber.'

"'Faith! if he is so ill-natured as people say, there 's no hurry.'

"'He 's not so ill-natured as he is proud and disdainful. For instance, two years ago he was dining with three of his companions and his jolly dog of a tutor at a tavern at Sceaur; the tutor, who felt rather dull amongst them, and who had gone to Sceaur on purpose, left the three little devils at table, ordered out the carriage, and bolted off to a woman living at Chatillon.'

"'Good luck to him! that 's something like a tutor!'

"When we returned, the young reprobates had called up a little street singer, about thirteen or fourteen, who played on the guitar, and had practised such horrid and savage tricks upon the poor creature, the little Viscount especially, that the whole tavern was in an uproar; and they wanted to serve out the Viscount and his fellow delinquents. 'But,' cried the lacquey to his comrade, 'I must put off the story till another time: there 's my master—the next time I see you, we will speak about the situation.'

"So saying, the footman hastened up to the grand entrance where I likewise followed him, expecting to see Count Robert shortly after Regina. I saw the young lady stop on the *perron* stone flight of steps; she was leaning on the arm of a gentleman about fifty; who, (I afterwards learned) was the Baron of Noirlieu, her father. His shape was slender and bent already; he had grey hair; his eyes were inflamed, with very deep orbits: his lean and meagre face, his bitter smile, which was contracted,

and permanently fixed upon his mouth, lent to his features such an expression of sickly and unhealthy sorrow, as seemed almost ferocious.

"Regina was dressed with the greatest simplicity: she wore a black gown, a white crape hat, but not so white as her marble countenance surrounded by her jet-black hair. Her look was most frigidly serious. The Prince of Montbar and Count Duriveau attended on her with eager solicitude; Duriveau, smiling and obsequious, spoke alternately to the baron who answered him laconically and with an absent look, and to Regina who appeared to treat him with extreme coldness. The Prince of Montbar, on the contrary; behaved towards the maiden with a reserve that was possibly calculated; for it seemed to me somewhat affected; nevertheless, with a smiling off-hand good humour, he paid particular attention to her father, who appeared to divest himself a little, in his favour of his sullen and peevish silence. Two or three times, however, the prince addressed a few words to Regina, to which she replied—not, as to Count Duriveau, with an air of haughty indifference, but by looking down as if she felt herself under constraint and embarrassment.

"Finally, a few steps behind this party, which he did not accompany, but only followed, I perceived Count Robert: his face was glowing, and beamed with triumphant joy.

"Count Duriveau's attendants arrived; Regina, her father, and the Count seated themselves in a splendid brown *berliné*, and two footmen immediately got up behind. Just as they drove off, Regina looked up and fixed her eye so long and so pointedly on Count Robert, that the Prince of Montbar, who was still standing on the last step of the *perron* suddenly faced about with a look of surprise, to endeavour to find out the person to whom that expressive and enduring look was directed; but whether by chance, or by prudent calculation, Count Robert found means to screen himself from view behind two or three by-standers, who were just come out of the Louvre. The prince, rather bewildered, entered his curricle, and immediately drove away.

"Count Robert now looked about and perceiving me, beckoned to me to fetch the carriage. I obeyed. As I was shutting the door, my master said to me, without hiding his satisfaction—

"'Drive home, my lad, and with all speed.'

"As soon as we got home, I followed at Count Robert's heels; we were met by Balthazar, who having, I suppose, watched our return, was waiting for us, leaning over the banisters.

"Unable to contain himself, the moment he descried the poet, Count Robert exclaimed—

"'*She's mine!*'

"'She's ours—victory!' cried the poet.

"And no sooner had I closed the door of the apartment, than Balthazar gave loose to the wildest exultation of joy. Robert, who ought at any rate to have been sensible of the grave circumstances affecting his triumph, partook nevertheless in the eccentric and tempestuous delight of the poet, excusable in the latter, but most reprehensible in Robert; and doubtless forgetting my presence, the two friends took each other by the hands and began to leap, jump, and dance with joy, exclaiming with rapturous enthusiasm—

"'Victory! long live Regina!'

"When this first effusion had subsided, the poet cried out—

"'Robert, let us show our gratitude to Providence—let us celebrate this great day in a proper manner. For weeks I have been living on the detestable larder of that paltry pitiful victualler in the Rue Saint Nicholas. Invite me this evening to dine with you at the Rocher du Cancale.*

"'Nem con!'

"'And after that, we 'll go to the theatre. I need hardly tell you where I long to go—to the Funambules, to see at length that hidden pearl—that unknown prodigy—that Basquine spoken of by Dupare.'

"'Carried unanimously; we 'll go to the Funambules,' said Robert; 'that will be doubly diverting, for that little theatre is always the *rendezvous* of your free spirits exhilarated with wine."

"'Martin will go with the carriage and order for six o'clock a dinner at fifty francs a head, exclusive of wine, and hire a box at the Funambules if there is one left,' said the poet.

"'Very good,' replied Robert.

"'Come, Martin, you shall share our joy,' exclaimed Balthazar: 'they shall serve up your dinner to you in some nook at the Rocher du Cancale, and you shall go to the pit of the Funambules.'

"'There,' said the Count, giving me several pieces of gold, 'you will pay there a hundred francs on account of the dinner—settle for the box, and keep the difference for yourself.'

"'But, sir, I do n't know where to find the Rocher du Cancale.'

"'Get up beside the driver, and he will show you the way, my simple Martin,' replied the poet; 'you have only to tell him the two sacred words—*Rocher, Funambules*, and away he 'll fly on the wings of his four-footed Zephyrs.'

"'Now,' said Count Robert, to his friend, as I was leaving the apartment, 'I must relate to you how the thing went off. *She 's mine*—oh! fully mine, I tell you.'

"And before I went down the staircase, I overheard Balthazar exclaiming—

"'Long live Regina!'

CHAPTER XV.

COUNT ROBERT, THE MERRY POET BALTHAZAR, AND MARTIN, GO TO THE FUNAMBULES.

"'Let us go to the Funambules, where we shall see that Basquine, whom a connoisseur has spoken of to me as an unknown prodigy,' Balthazar had said to Count Robert.

"I was fully convinced this time it was the friend of my childhood that was alluded to. Great was my joy at the bare idea. I went first and ordered the dinner at the Rocher du Cancale, then the coachman conducted me to the Funambules; I stopped to read the play-bill, the performance was to be the *Enchanted Cap*; among the names in the list of actresses I looked for that of Basquine, which I discovered at last very quietly inserted at the end of a line. The reputation of the poor girl could not yet therefore be great. She must still be, as Balthazar had observed, an unknown marvel. I inquired for the box-office; the money-taker, after giving me the box-ticket in return for the value, said to me—

"'It was the last I had left, my worthy; our theatre is rising in public favour. This very day our boxes have been let to marquises, counts, and captains; in short the same fashionable life as at the Italian opera.'

"'Does Miss Basquine perform this evening, sir?' inquired I of the money-taker.

"'No; but the famous Clorinda plays the part of the Silver Fairy.'

* One of the best among the hundred great and glorious taverns whose delicate and substantial dinners have immortalised Paris, and to have eaten only once at which fixes eternally in the memory of a free liver a jubilee day, hardly second to that of his wedding. There is but one man in England can describe such a sumptuous repast, and that is the great author of "Pelham."—*Translator's note.*

"'And yet I saw Basquine's name in the play-bill.'

"'Yes, true, the little *figurante* has a small part —the Evil Genius; but she does not stay above a quarter of an hour on the stage.'

"'And yet for all that, Basquine has displayed great talent, sir.'

"'Talent! a *figurante* at ten sous a night! talent! poor young man! I pity your simplicity.'

"'Can you inform me, sir, where Miss Basquine resides?'

"'Where she resides!' exclaimed the money-taker, laughing outright; 'you ought to know, young man, that *figurantes* at ten sous a night do not reside anywhere—sometimes they roost, and even then——'

"Here the money-taker turned his back upon me.

"I was rather disappointed; but I thought at least that I should see Basquine that night, trusting to the inspiration of the moment to find the opportunity to speak to her after the play was over.

"Balthazar kept his promise; whilst he was dining merrily with Count Robert, and celebrating beforehand the *conquest* of Regina's millions, I was served, in a kind of pantry, with the most sumptuous meal I had ever seen in my life; but I did little honour to the feast, so much was my fancy taken up, partly with contriving means to see Basquine, and partly with my fears for Regina's future lot, and likewise with Count Robert's hopes, as he appeared to have secured her love.

"After my masters had dined, they called me into their presence: I opened the carriage-door, and it was driven off to the Funambules.

"The two friends having given me the wherewithal abundantly to pay for my place, I entered the pit. I had never before been to any theatre; consequently my astonishment and curiosity were very great, and still further heightened because I entered between the acts in the midst of a tumultuous uproar,—an event by no means uncommon in that house.

"This noise had been occasioned by the disrespectful attitude of several persons in the stage-box. All my neighbours in the pit stood up on the seats, and vociferated with all their might—

"'Turn them out!—turn them out! Face the pit!' while the lower and upper galleries repeated these cries in chorus, accompanied with hisses, groans, and clattering with the feet, which altogether produced a stunning effect.

"The company in the stage-box, who were the cause of this horrid din, were sitting on the edge of their box, and thus showed their backs to the public.

At length, whether they apprehended an actual riot, or that they thought they had sufficiently protested against the *popular tyranny*, they turned leisurely round, casting a glance of disdain over the house; nevertheless, this *defeat* of the stage-box was hailed by a loud cry of victory, which broke forth from every part of the house, and this incident passed off in quiet.

"The box, the next to the one wherein Count Robert and Balthazar were seated, was occupied by four persons. Two of them I knew—Count Duriveau and his son Viscount Scipio. I had seen the former the day before at Regina's father's, and that very morning at the Louvre. As for Scipio, although he was several years older than at the time of our meeting in the forest, and was much grown, his features were scarcely altered: he had still the same charming countenance, the flaxen curling locks, the same precocious expression of impertinent defiance. Although Viscount Scipio was barely adolescent, he looked much more like a *small young man*, as the saying is, than like a child.

When the Viscount turned his face towards the house, his complexion was heightened, his eye glittered with anger; I was struck by the bold and insulting gesture with which he defied the spectators as he held up and showed them the little switch he carried in his small hand covered with glazed kid gloves.

"Coming from a man, this harmless menace would certainly have excited a new storm; but Scipio's bravado was, on the contrary, greeted with fresh outbreaks of laughter and ironical applause. I cannot tell to what length the child's passion might have carried him, for his lips were compressed with rage, had not his father withdrawn him to the back part of the box. A boy, about Scipio's age, and a man with an intelligent but sullen and vulgar aspect, was the fourth in the party. By what I had that morning gathered from the Count's domestics, I guessed this dark-looking man must have been the tutor, as was really the case: the boy was one of Scipio's play-fellows.

"Unused as I was to the world, I thought it was very singular that the Count should have selected this theatre to take his son to, not on account of the nature of the performances, for the fairy scenes are made to entertain children; but the Count could not help knowing that this theatre often was chosen as a *rendezvous* to those wild young fellows who desired to spend an uproarious evening after their indulgent libations.

"Soon after the three customary knocks, struck behind the curtain, commanded general silence, the orchestra played a dull mournful overture. Whilst impatient to see Basquine, I addressed myself to a person sitting beside me.

"'Shall we soon see Miss Basquine?' said I to him.

"'Who is Basquine? Oh! the fair-haired girl that plays the evil genius. No, not yet: she only comes on in the last scene of the present act.'

"'Basquine has a good deal of talent, has she not, sir?'

"'Faith! I can't say; she is rather droll. When she makes her diabolical grimaces, she looks as wicked as the devil; but at one time she wishes to sing. Oh! then, indeed, she is as tedious as the opera.'

"'Oh! sir, how can you say so!' resumed my left-hand neighbour; 'Basquine plays her little part with much spirit; and she has a good voice—a true voice. For my part I am come on purpose to hear her sing that little fragment of a song.'

"'Every one to his taste,' replied my right-hand neighbour.

"Then he whispered to me:

"'Do n't listen to that gentleman; he knows nothing about it. That Basquine is no actress—she 's a poor *figurante*, as lean as a skewer, and affects tragedy; what say you to that—tragedy at the Funambules? Is it not pitcons? but take notice of Clorinda, who performs the Silver Fairy. That 's something like; she 's a real actress! I recommend you her calves, &c., &c. You shall see what an elegant gait she has.'

"At that moment the curtain rose; I cast a single glance at the box which contained my masters: Balthazar, who sat in the front of the box, was full of spirits and quite elated: he appeared greatly diverted, whilst Robert, who sat behind him, looked dull and thoughtful. I could not reconcile that dejection with his perfect assurance of being loved by Regina. This strange behaviour reminded me of Robert's altered looks after his private interview with La Levrasse. Although these remarks afforded me ample matter to reflect upon, I turned all my attention to the fairy piece, and only longed to see Basquine appear.

"These thoughts led me back retrospectively to the scenes of my childhood,—recollections at once so bitter and so sweet. I soon forgot to watch the

piece that was being acted, as I was sure of being recalled from my visions to reality by Basquine's voice the moment she should come upon the stage.

"But I was roused from these musings by a new incident.

"In front of Count Duriveau's box stood a box which had remained empty; two mean-looking men, shabbily attired, had installed themselves in it, by climbing over the partition from the gallery. The owners of the box coming in and finding it occupied, a violent altercation ensued, and the performance was for a short time suspended.

"The two intruders, one of whom was of short stature, stood up, gesticulating, and appeared determined to dispute the ground inch by inch, *when all at once two long arms were seen to lay hold of the smaller intruder, lift him off his feet, raise him over the partition of the gallery, and then let him alight upon the seat he had abandoned, to pass into the stage-box.*

"This proof of vigorous strength and ludicrous *sang-froid* excited a general burst of enthusiasm; the pit and gallery applauded to the skies, and many voices cried out:

"'The author! the author!'

"For the man with the long arms, hitherto scarcely perceived, had returned to the back of the box, probably to pull out the second intruder in like manner; but the latter, as well as his companion, vanished in a moment, in order to escape the hisses of the audience.

"However, the general curiosity was so greatly excited, that they were determined to behold the author of that vigorous joke; and pit, lower gallery, and upper gallery repeated with formidable clamour:

"'The author! the author!'

"This flattering call did not seem to shock the modesty of *the author* of the feat; he came forward to the front of the box with a self-satisfied air, and bowed to the public, putting his hand to his heart with a look of most ludicrous confusion.

"The cries, the bravos were renewed. The *author*, wishing no doubt to share the flattering ovation with a person in his company, turned round, and half-willing, half-reluctant, brought forward to the edge of the box a rather pretty woman, with a pert, impudent face, though seemingly disconcerted by this unexpected presentation.

"This time the opinions were divided as to the behaviour of the man with the long arms.

"Some applauded enthusiastically, and these he saluted again.

"Others hissed, and the Viscount Scipio and his youthful comrade were of the number. The man with the long arms bowed to these also with inflexible sedateness.

"A division of parties was on the eve of resolving into hostile opposition between the *pros* and *cons*, when the *neutral party*, who took no interest in the outbreak, called loudly to the stage to proceed with the performance.

"This last opinion was agreed to; the dissentients were again united, and silence gradually returned. The man with the long arms sat down on one side of his box, and the pert-faced female took her seat on the other. The performance was resumed.

"As for me, I was transfixed—my whole frame palpitated; for in the man with the long arms I had just recognised BAMBOCHE.

"His stature was tall, robust, and easy. He wore his black hair very closely cropped, as in former times, which, displaying his large forehead, lent a peculiar character to his features. Therefore it was that I had recognised my old comrade at once; his dark bushy whiskers, his thick moustache of the same colour, added still more to the resolute expression of his bold and strongly marked countenance; but his face was no longer fierce and sardonic: instead of that—jolly, impudent, and humorous. His dress bespoke at once luxury and ill taste: a thick gold chain fell meandering over his red velvet waistcoat; he wore diamond studs in his shirt, whilst the cuffs of his chesnut coat, turned up above the wrists, exhibited his large hands of doubtful cleanliness, adorned with several costly rings, which sparkled on his broad fingers. Thinking, I suppose, that it looked fashionable to appear short-sighted, Bamboche, in spite of the brightness of his full grey eyes, open, lively, and brilliant, kept looking from time to time in a very awkward manner through a double opera-glass. The female he had in his company, to whom he paid very little attention, wore a new rose-coloured bonnet, and a very handsome shawl.

"The fairy-piece went forward, but my eyes were fixed upon Bamboche; my heart throbbed with great violence, and I recognised the truth of this prediction of Claude Gerard's:

"'Though you should not meet your companions for ten—nay, for twenty years, you will experience as deeply as ever those feelings of early friendship which bind you to Basquine and Bamboche.'

"And truly it seemed to me that I had hardly been a few days sundered from them. I did not stop to inquire within myself by what dangerous means, certainly culpable, and perhaps criminal, Bamboche, so recently ruined, hunted as a smuggler, and the acknowledged accomplice of La Levrasse and the Rump-in-the-Bowl, was able to parade so much costliness. I did not inquire whether the assurance with which he dared to show himself in public was the result of his incredible audacity, or of his innocence; but I thought only of the delight of seeing him again. In spite of all I could do, my eyes moistened when I thought that we should shortly say to each other: '*Do you recollect?*' There was one thing made me uneasy. Did Bamboche know that Basquine was about to appear on the stage? had he the same regard for her as formerly? The company of the female he was with puzzled me very much. I had fully determined to go and ask for him at the door of his box, and in the meanwhile I hardly once took my eyes off him. His female friend having leaned over towards him, whispered something in his ear; immediately after, although he seemed to relish the performance like a child, Bamboche nodded to her in the affirmative and left the box.

"'You wished to see Basquine,' said my left-hand neighbour, the declared admirer of the poor *figurante*. 'Look! she is about to appear. There's the thunder, the flames, and all the loud racket which proclaims her coming.'

"The reader may imagine with what impatient, greedy eyes I now looked at the stage.

"The scene at that moment represented a deep and gloomy forest; the thunder roared, and frequent lightnings flashed over the stage.

"The sight of that decoration, the noise of that thunder brought back another similar scene to my memory.

"Several years before, in a gloomy forest, where the thunder roared and the lightning flashed, three deserted children and three richlings had met together by chance.

"Five of those children — Scipio, Robert de Marcuil, Bamboche, Basquine, and I, were this evening once more collected, each ignorant of the other's presence at this buffoon theatre.

"Just at the moment when the thunder sounded with a louder crash behind the scenes, a trap-door flew open, and sent forth volumes of red flame, after which, the flames gradually subsiding, I saw Basquine issue from the depths of hell.

"She was then about sixteen or seventeen; her figure, above the middle size, was slender and singularly elegant; the only fault that could be found with her was, that she was rather too thin—a consequence, no doubt, of poverty and grief.

"Basquine had on a pair of flesh-coloured tights

which displayed the beautiful contour of her legs; the shapely form of her arms, the dazzling whiteness of her breast and shoulders, were still farther enhanced by the contrast of her black *jupe*, dotted with alabaster figures in red and silver; above her forehead, crowned with magnificent fair hair turned up in tresses, arose two small silver horns, waving like feathers, whilst at the back of her large shoulders, as polished as marble, two pinions of black crape, capped with silver claws, were lightly swinging to and fro.

"In spite of this satanic costume, closely bordering on the ridiculous, this apparition gave me an acute pang, so much was I struck with the truly demoniac expression of Basquine's features, in spite of their own angelic purity. As she wore no rouge she appeared fearfully pale; her large eyes alone served with their vivid lustre to illuminate her face, as white as a winding-sheet.

"It is hopeless to attempt giving any idea of the indefinable contrast of that burning glance of almost feverish ardour, and that bitter smile of icy coldness—by which that lovely face was contracted. Some vacant instinctive feeling assured me that this was no mask put on at leisure, and merely for the necessity of the part she was playing. No—no; I remembered too well the accent of wrathful resentment that Basquine had imparted to the vindictive toast of *hatred to the rich*, after having been with us so contemptuously repulsed by the richlings in the forest of Chantilly. I too well remembered the savage joy that had spread itself over her features, hitherto so mild, when that evening I carried off in my arms the fainting Regina. No—no, I felt that in the part of the *Evil Genius*, the soul of Basquine, exasperated by a long series of misery, was unfolding all its revengeful passion in her face. Fatality had made her for that part,—which chance had supplied to her. The profound impression she produced on a few superior judges, sufficiently attested that something else than the mere performance of an unmeaning part resided in that spirit.

"The appearance of Basquine, her attitude, her action, her countenance—her fine dramatic countenance, were not at first applauded; and why? I understand it now: in the eyes of most of the audience, Basquine was nothing more than a pretty actress, rather too lean and pale. As for the few sound appreciators, they generally applaud but little. But there was one exception. Balthazar exclaimed:

"'She is prodigious! stunning! sublime!'

"And then he thundered his applause.

"Perhaps these unusual plaudits would have found an echo, for nothing is more electrical than admiration; but frequently a trifle in another moment chills that enthusiasm. So it was this time: a prolonged tittering, and repeated cries of 'Hush, hush,' came from the stage-box of little Scipio, and suffocated that effusive delight which the animating *bravos* of Balthazar had begun to excite. The poet did not lose heart—he renewed his applause with all his might. This awkward though friendly behaviour produced fresh cries of 'Hush, hush,' which were no longer confined to the little Viscount's box.

"As for Basquine, she seemed entirely absorbed in her part, and looked unconscious of what was passing in the house; but a new and most cruel incident just at this time came effectually to rouse the poor actress from her dramatic illusions.*

* Some readers may object to the idea of a young girl of sixteen enacting the part of the Spirit of Evil, and coming up from the *depths of hell*; but let them wait for the sequel before they form their opinion. The idea is a singularly happy and great one; and if Eugene Sue is equal to his conception, the part of Basquine may render this novel the finest of his many fine performances. London as well as Paris abounds with young victims of lust polluted from childhood; and Mr. George Reynolds, in a recent Number of the "Mysteries of London" (Second Series) has laid this frightful enormity completely bare. Who then can wonder at the after feelings of grief, anger and revenge, that a few superior spirits amongst them will necessarily feel towards the whole race, when they look back and consider the irreparable injury they have sustained? The fact is Society whilst indulging its pleasures, makes Criminals, and is therefore the true origin of Crime. The swindler, the thief, the prostitute, the murderer, may exist to some little extent in Nature, but not to a great one; and it does not require much argument to prove that the large majority of these aliens from Society are the natural offspring of that very Order by which they are so fiercely discarded.—*Translator's note.*

CHAPTER XVI.

MASTER SCIPIO PLAYS A MOST PRACTICAL JOKE, BAMBOCHE SHOWS HIMSELF A HERO, AND THE THREE FRIENDS ARE ONCE MORE UNITED.

"In order to understand the event which so abruptly broke in upon and discomposed Basquine in the crisis of her part, a few previous observations will be necessary.

"When once she had issued out of hell, the Spirit of Evil, (she performed this the reverse part of the Good Fairy) Basquine, transfixed and immoveable awhile, crossed her arms over her breast, then with slow and lingering steps she went up to Harlequin asleep beneath the protecting ægis of the Silver Fairy, represented by Clorinda, the blooming actress of the chubby charms.

"Bedecked in gauze and silver, holding in one hand a golden horn of plenty, the protectress of Harlequin drew forth flowers and sprinkled them with all her graciousness over her sleeping ward, as an emblem of the happy fate she had in store for him.

"Basquine, holding her arms still crossed over her bosom, kept advancing with gradual steps towards the Silver Fairy; it is hopeless to portray the mocking pity with which she seemed to behold the vain and futile enchantments of the Silver Fairy, who was striving to cover her ward with allegorical flowers; there was one moment especially when Basquine, slightly raising her shoulders, took her last step towards the good Fairy—one step only—but accompanied with a wringing of the neck so viperous, and a look so laden with scorn and deadly fascination, that the good fairy seemed to be struck with that stiff and motionless affright that the reptile imparts to its victim before it devours him. Advancing therefore step by step towards Basquine as if drawn forward by magical attraction, the Silver Fairy, with a tremulous hand, extended to her her horn of abundance. Basquine took out a flower, a fine rose newly blown: she showed it to the fairy with a cold cutting smile, as if to make her admire the beauty of the flower; then, drawing it to her lips, she breathed on it slightly, and the rose instantly turning black, spent its leaves of itself upon the ground.

"Never, no never, shall I forget the action, the gesture, the attitude, the look, the smile, the aspect of Basquine: all her pitiful irony, her fierce and thrilling sarcasm, when with her deadly breath, she withered that fresh and ruddy flower, like the hopes and illusions of youth; with what disdain, casting down her large glittering eyes, darkly glowing, she afterwards considered the fragments of the flower that she trampled under her feet.*

* There is a very fine thought in one of Fielding's novels—Amelia, or the Wife, I think it is—wherein that great writer tells the readers that they are in no danger of being thought extravagant in their homage of a lady's beauty, because she has one enthusiastic flatterer that goes beyond them all, namely her *looking glass*. In like manner it may be seen in many writers and thinkers of the highest class how well they know their own value. And can any body fail to see the cordial admiration of his own fine thought which lurks in this passage of the large minded author of Martin? Every body sees that, it is palpable. But there is something else to be found here, which very few can see, and which one of the greatest critics of the time disclosed to us the other day. That

"I did not think the interest of the scene could be still carried further. I was mistaken: there soon followed a more moving fluctuation.

"After the rose, Basquine gathered from the horn a fresh posy of myrtle and orange flowers; the emblem, in all likelihood, of Harlequin's betrothed. Once more alarmed, the Silver Fairy fell on her knees to Basquine; and clasping her hands, and supplicating, she seemed to implore her to spare that posy.

"Basquine, pitiless at first, and disdainfully repelling the prayers of the Silver Fairy, grasped the posy with nervous exultation; but suddenly she seemed to melt, and look with pity on the flowers. Gradually, as she gazes upon them, the young girl's features become totally changed, her face resumed that angelic mildness,—that engaging openness, which I had so often noticed in her childhood. Far from withering the posy, Basquine caressed it with gentle action and looks, and with feelings of innocent and delightful tenderness. It is impossible to conceive the winning grace, the captivating enchantment that Basquine at that moment displayed; and therefore, the Silver Fairy, smiling, happy, and confident again, kissed the hands of the *Spirit of Evil*, believing the posy to be saved. Alas! vain hope. At once the angel relapsed into the demon; with one breath the posy was withered, and the Spirit uttered a laugh of derision, but loud and harmonious; then she *melted*, so to speak, the last vibrations of that laughter, into the *andante* of an air of *bravura*, of a wild and powerful character (her own composition), the words running nearly thus:

"*I am the Spirit of Evil, evil is my sovereign rule; my cold and icy breath withers every joy; I need but show myself, and happiness is turned into grief.*

"Basquine sang this air and its very indifferent words, with an expression so admirable, that she imparted thereto an awful sense; her *mezzo-soprano* voice, at once low, smooth, sonorous, and vibrating, made your very heart-strings quiver.

"Nor was I the only auditor who felt deeply impressed by that rare and commanding talent.

"Suspended to the lips of Basquine, I glanced stealthily at the box occupied by Balthazar and Count Robert, a box situated almost on the stage.

"The poet listened to Basquine with an interest and admiration which he expressed by the most eccentric enthusiasm in his looks, action, and posture. Count Robert, on the contrary, listened with collected ecstacy. At first, seated in the hinder part of the box, then as if astonished in his own despite by the voice, the acting, and the beauty of Basquine, he had gradually stretched his head forward, and leaning one hand on the ledge of the box, kept his eye fixed on the actress, and seemed completely fascinated.

"In front of Count Robert's box, but in an upper tier, was the box taken by Bamboche. His absence continued, and his female companion was still alone. The talent which was now revealing itself in Basquine, a poor unknown *figurante*, was unfelt by most of the audience; but there were a few who could appreciate it.

"She was, I think, in the middle of her chant, and was singing it with increasing intensity, when an unexpected event suddenly interrupted her.

"Viscount Scipio had thought it a prime piece of fun—a good practical joke—to throw by stealth upon the stage a handful of fulminating balls, probably bought for the purpose, and already tried several times at this theatre.

"Basquine, in the midst of the piece she was singing, set her foot by accident on several of the balls; and as they exploded she sprang back alarmed; her foot got entangled in a piece of the stage scenery which served to hide the trap-door she had issued from; she staggered and fell, but in so ludicrous a posture, that a storm of laughter and hisses broke forth, first from the Viscount's stage-box, and then generally from all parts of the house. This cruel misfortune was the more ridiculous, because the poor girl was playing so serious and gloomy a personage. The unhappy girl arose with a livid face, and casting at Scipio one terrific scowl of despair and blackest hate, she attempted to fly from the stage; but, in her confusion, she twice mistook the wings. Thereupon, the howlings, the hisses, the laughter grew still more uproarious, until, finding an egress, she disappeared in woful dismay.

"But at that moment a new incident raised the tumult to its height.

"Bearer of a bag of oranges which he had purchased out of gallantry for his companion, Bamboche was returning to his box amidst the confusion caused by the fulminating balls and Basquine's fall. To recognise our early friend and exclaim in a stentorian voice:—'BASQUINE I COME!' to spring out upon the stage, run up to the Viscount's box, and to brush, with one single slap, Scipio, his father, and the tutor, at the very moment Basquine vanished off the stage, and to run out after her,—all these things took Bamboche but a minute.

"The stupor caused by the incredible audacity of that man kept the spectators in mute suspense, and motionless, for several seconds; they distrusted their eyes, and were still wonderingly inquiring of one another if they had seen what they had seen, when Bamboche had already made off; but then the uproar, for a moment quelled, became truly formidable.

"As for me, the moment Bamboche had gained the side wings in pursuit of Basquine, a thought quicker than lightning uplifted me out of my seat, made me cross in a twinkling, and I do n't know, how, the serried ranks of the spectators; after which, plunging out of the theatre, I reached the stage door. Just as I came up to it, I was hustled by two persons who were rushing out from the theatre. These were Bamboche and Basquine—the latter enveloped in a mantle, and scarcely able to stand.

"Feeling the danger and awkwardness of a recognition in such a situation, and perceiving the carriage of my masters close to the spot, I said to Bamboche, taking hold of him:

"'Here 's a carriage: step in, quick!'

"And in a second I had opened the carriage-door for the two fugitives. This hopeless succour was so opportune, that Bamboche, without seeking to know how that carriage chanced to be there so pat to the occasion, threw in Basquine, and leapt in after her, saying to me—

'"You shall be well paid:—go where you like; but drive like fury.'

"'To the Barriere de L'Etoile (the star gate), and swiftly as the wind,' said I to the coachman.

"And I sprang up behind.

"We rolled rapidly away;—but I had time to see a large crowd collect about the theatre, whilst the shining muskets of the soldiers who had doubtless been summoned from the guard-house, were seen approaching the scene of riot.

"I could not contain my joy, and looked with delight upon that vehicle behind which I was standing, and in which sat the two friends of my early days. Suddenly the coachman drew up,—one of the glasses was let down abruptly, and I heard Bamboche exclaim in a voice of terror—

"'Stop, stop,—she has fainted:—my God! what is to be done?'

"We no longer ran any danger of being pursued; for we had by that time got as far as the Boulevard Saint Denis:—I ran to the door.

"'My lad,' said Bamboche to me, "I do n't know

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critic is a Frenchman. A part of great "*pith and moment*" it is, to Englishmen, and among the million of them who are now reading Martin, I wonder if even one will discover it?—*Translator's note.*

where the devil you sprang from to assist me so opportunely,—and still less why you came to our assistance at all; but you shall not repent it. The dear girl has fainted:—we must get some ether directly, and some vinegar. After that we'll drive to my lodging, and you can take the carriage back. Here 's the money to pay for the ether, and keep the change for yourself.'

"Then Bamboche put a double louis in my hand.

"'Thank you, sir,' said I to him, repressing my emotion, and feeling a kind of pleasure in thus retaining my incognito a few moments longer.

"'There must be more than one apothecary in the Rue Saint Denis,—we will drive along it with the carriage.'

"'That 's right—lose no time.'

"Bamboche then let down the other windows of the carriage to give Basquine all the air he could. He supported her in his arms, and she appeared to me to be perfectly senseless.

"My advice proved sound. In the course of a few minutes we met with an apothecary's shop: I bought a bottle of ether. Bamboche applied it to Basquine to inhale, and by degrees she recovered her senses.

"'Now to my place,' said Bamboche: 'the Pyrenees' Hotel, Rue du Petit Leon Saint Sauveur, No. 17.'

"I gave that address to the coachman, and returned to my post, more satisfied as to Basquine's health, and delighted at the surprise I was about to give my two friends, and altogether forgetting my masters, who must have been very uneasy about me and their carriage, if they had left the theatre.

"When we reached Bamboche's hotel, I said to the coachman before opening the carriage-door—

"'As soon as the persons we have brought by my masters' order shall get out, you may return,—you are no further required.'

"Basquine, although restored to her senses, appeared still very weak. Bamboche was obliged to take her almost in his arms to lift her out of the carriage: then, whilst we were still standing in the street, and the coachman was driving off, Bamboche said to the young girl—

"'Stay;—before you enter the hotel, allow me to put your mantle quite across you, and let down the hood over your head. These stupid porters are so prying, and their better halves so talkative, that the sight of your stage dress would produce quite a sensation through the house.'

"'You say well,' answered she, in a feeble voice, and shivering as she spoke.

"Whilst Bamboche was engaged concealing Basquine's costume beneath the folds of her mantle, I had stood apart in the shade. I then said to my friend, lowering my voice to the softest whisper, the better to conceal it—

"'Sir—here 's the change of the forty-franc piece you gave me.'

"'I told you it was for yourself, my lad.'

"'Thank you, sir; but if you think you owe me any gratitude grant me another favour.'

"So saying, I returned the money to Bamboche.

"'And what the devil can you ask me to grant you?' he replied, with more astonishment.

"'Allow me to speak two words to you privately, in your own apartment.'

"'Be it so;—and truly there is something in this adventure that I wish to clear up. Follow us.'

"When the street gate was *let open*, my friend passed hurriedly before the porter's lodge; but the keeper put out his head, exclaiming—

"'Who are you, sir?'

"'Do n't you know me again?' said Bamboche without stopping.

"'But who are you, then?'

"'Thunder of heaven! Captain Bambochio.'

"'Oh! I beg your pardon a thousand times, Captain;—I did not remember you,' said the porter with deference, proving to me that my friend enjoyed a certain degree of consideration and respect in the house.

"I cut short the same question when the porter was about to speak to me, by saying—

"'I am going up with the captain.'

"'Very well, my lad,' resumed the porter. Then, changing his mind, he hurried out of his lodge, and cried out to Bamboche, already half up the first flight of stairs—

"'Captain,—I forgot to say that the major called three times to inquire for you.'

"'May the devil take him and you likewise!' answered Bamboche, continuing his ascent.

"'The Captain has always something pleasant to say,' observed the porter, who appeared to be accustomed to my friend's coarse manners, and not offended by them.

"Bamboche stopped on the second-floor landing: we entered his apartment, where there was a small lamp burning in the entry. He opened a side door, and said to Basquine—

"'Go in there;—there must some live ashes remaining,—kindle up the fire, and warm yourself. I shall return to you in five minutes.'

"Then, turning back to me as soon as we were left alone—

"'Now, my worthy, here we are together,—tell me first of all——'

"But I could dissemble no longer: I flung myself abruptly about his neck, and cried—

"'Have you, then, forgotten Martin?'

"Bamboche, amazed and stunned, drew back at first,—tore himself from my embrace the better to examine me: then, drawing me close, and, in his turn, pressing me to his chest, he exclaimed in a voice stifled by his feelings—

"'Basquine! it 's Martin!'

"I heard—so to speak—a bound in the room;—the door opened, and Basquine, still half-covered with her mantle, rushed out into the ante-chamber, flew and clung to my neck, mingling her mute embraces,—her tears to the tears and embraces of Bamboche and to mine, for we were weeping all three of us.

"A long silence then followed, during which we all three clung closely together,—a silence only interrupted at intervals by those sobs of convulsive, and deep, deep joy, which lift the heart up above its seat.

"Oh! blessed be thou, my God! who, by such moments as these, makest us forget days and years of misfortune! Blessed be thou, my God, who hast so magnificently endued thy creatures, that the most depraved, the most miserable amongst them, are still able to taste those ravishing delights, the ineffable sweetness of which, and their saintly purity and loftiness, brings them nearer to thy divinity, if it be no blasphemy to say so, by removing them from their wonted nature.

"There we stood,—three poor victims of human fate. We had suffered much,—we had committed many guilty actions: our future prospects were gloomy—still more gloomy than our past misfortunes. And yet, in that fine exultation in which our souls were united, those hard sufferings, that gloomy past, that terrifying future,—all—all were forgotten. And these misdeeds—the almost inevitable consequences of poverty and desertion,—these misdeeds ought they not to be forgotten, and even pardoned, by thy fatherly mercy and justice, O my my God! for all was not withered—all was assuredly not dead in the souls of those who, after having erred, were still capable of feeling so deeply, and, withal, so sacredly, the heavenly intoxication of friendship!*

* This is doubtless a very able passage, and exhibits another proof both of the far extending vision and the intense humanity of this great advocate of the people.

CHAPTER XVII.

MARTIN, BAMBOCHE, AND BASQUINE, ONCE MORE UNDER THE SAME ROOF.

"'LET us go into my chamber, that we may see one another,' cried Bamboche, after the first effusion of our joy had partly subsided.

"We entered the room accordingly, lighted by two wax candles, standing on the chimney-piece.

"Basquine, having already laid aside her demoniac head-gear, was wrapped up in her mantle, fastened by a girdle to her waist.

"Then there occurred another pause, during which we all three surveyed each other with that quick and gentle curiosity ever induced by the first interview that succeeds a long separation.

"The bold countenance of Bamboche had lost its wonted character of ironical insolence: his tearful eyes sped alternately from me to Basquine, whilst the latter, with one hand locked in that of our companion, and the other fondly resting on my shoulder, considered me with that sad and pensive smile which had been so habitual to her in her childhood when she spoke of her father and her home.

"Closely examined, Basquine's features appeared still finer and purer than on the stage; but then, likewise, the stamp of misery and sorrow became more obvious: her complexion, once so clearly transparent and roseate, though slightly embrowned by the atmosphere, now declined beneath a sickly pallor: her lips, heretofore so purple and so brisk, had whitened; in short, it required the grace, the taper elegance of her swan-like neck, and the noble contour of her shoulders to make you forget her lean and spare condition. Alas! I must confess it, that charming face of sixteen, already faded, withered, and colourless, bespoke so plainly the enduring habit of privation and bitter distress, that the tears started to my eyes.

"'You find me very much altered, Martin, do n't you?' said she, guessing the cause of my emotion; 'for my part, I should have known you directly.' Then, turning to Bamboche, and looking at me—'How good and honest he looks!—do n't he?'

"'That reminds me of what I said to the schoolmaster,—the man we robbed, and who took Martin home,' resumed Bamboche:—'From what you tell me of Martin, I fancy I see his mild, serious face, in which his character may be read. I was not deceived,—it is even so,' added Bamboche, looking steadfastly at me: 'yes,—that 's the very thing, and it does one good to see an honest face;—it revives one.'

"'As for you,' said Basquine to Bamboche, with a singular combination of affection, reproachfulness, and melancholy in her accent, 'you are not altered, the sharpest points are blunted as they touch you,—nothing can pierce thy hard, iron-bound nature.'

"'Nothing can pierce it, save you and Martin.'

"Basquine shook her head.

"'When I saw you both again, I wept like a child,' continued Bamboche, not seeming to notice her gesture; 'why, after so many years' absence, to meet once more together——"

"'To recover, in one day, you,' said Basquine to me, extending one hand, 'and you!' added she, giving the other to Bamboche.

"'You are not angry with me still?' inquired Bamboche, almost with fear in his look.

"'Between us three, ought we not to forgive every thing?' said Basquine soothingly. Then a sudden flame glittered in her eye,—her mocking lip was contracted, and she added—

"'It is for others we must reserve and cultivate our hate.'

"'It 's, then, a long time since you had seen Bamboche?' said I to her.

"'Three years,' she replied.

"'Yes,—three years,' resumed Bamboche, without daring—so to say—to look up to Basquine.

"'So, then,—you did not know she was to perform to-night?' said I to him.

"'I did not even know she was in Paris; nor had I so much as read the play-bill,' he replied. 'When I returned to my box the noise was begun; a cabal got up, I 'll swear, by those cursed yellow gloves in the stage-box:—unfortunately, I had but just time enough to slap their faces.'

"'In that box, you must have recognised him?' said I.

"'Who?'

"'Scipio, the little viscount!'

"'The little urchin in the forest of Chantilly?' exclaimed Bamboche.

"'Martin tells the truth,' said Basquine in a hollow voice; 'it was, indeed, the viscount.'

"'Then you knew he was there, my poor Basquine?' I asked her.

"'No;—entirely wrapped up in my part, I never suspected the viscount's presence, otherwise, I should have expected any mischief at his hands.'

"'Wherefore?' said I.

"'Had you met him again since the adventure in the forest?' added Bamboche, equally surprised as myself.

"'Yes,—for it really seems as if some ominous fate constantly brings me and that malignant little creature together,' replied Basquine, with suppressed resentment. 'Two years ago I met him, and on that day, as on this, was I humbled and insulted to the quick.'

"'The wretch!' I exclaimed. 'But whence proceeds his furious persecution of you?'

"'I cannot tell,' resumed Basquine.

"'Oh! viscount, viscount,' said Bamboche; 'you and your father, I will overtake you both yet: and, Basquine, you shall be revenged.'

"'I do n't require any assistance,' said the girl proudly; 'I can abide my time.'

"'And think you—as it was two years ago—that Scipio recognised you?' said I to her.

"'No,—no more than he did to-day, I am certain of it: the instinct of evil and accident alone directed him. I tell you, there is a fatality in some things.'

"Then, sweeping her lean and wasted hand over her brow, Basquine added more tenderly—

"'And you,—have you suffered much?—and now, are you at length happy?'

"'But, now I perceive it,' said Bamboche, examining me with a look of half-sorrowful surprise,—'what you, Martin,—you in a livery?'

"'Why, truly,' added Basquine more sadly; 'are you reduced so low?'

"'*Pardieu!* do n't wonder at it,' exclaimed Bamboche, in a tone of bitter raillery; 'his soul is so pure, no state can be too wretched for him. 'Tis with him as with you, my Basquine,—you were an angel to me, and yet——"

"'Let us forget it all,' said she, interrupting Bamboche.

Still, with all deference to the taste of one who is so abundantly gifted with that which is the prime element of taste—*sensibility*,—I think this apostrophe too earthly to be addressed to the Creator. Let Eugene Sue, whilst he is probing society to the core, expostulate with man, and condemn him as often as he thinks fit; in so doing, he may almost always trust to his judgment. But here he ventures to reason and to argue, not with man, *but with the Maker!* Considering the universal sweep of this author's mind, the general influence he already possesses throughout the civilized world,—the lasting reputation he is making for himself, and the expansive hold he may have on the opinions of more than one generation, it is, above all other things, desirable that he should not afford his adversaries so strong, so unanswerable an objection as this, on which to ground their censure of his writings. The multitude has too much reason to complain of man; but they never can have any excuse for lessening, in the faintest manner, their immeasurable devotion, and humble gratitude to God.—*Translator's note.*

"'Yes—let us forget it,' he replied, with bitterness, and then he continued in a serious voice which affected me: 'You hear what she says, Martin, and yet towards her I was brutal, malignant, unfeeling.'

"'All that is now over,' answered Basquine.

"'It is over,' said Bamboche, despondingly—'it is all over, like your love for me.'

"'Love!' cried the girl, shrugging her shoulders whilst she resumed that look of freezing irony which had struck me so much in her part of the *Spirit of Evil*; 'you hear him, Martin—he talks to me of love—*at my age*. Why, my poor children, I began so early, that now, with regard to love, I AM FIFTY YEARS OLD.'

"Then followed among us three a pause of grievous silence. In spite of his rough nature, Bamboche was confounded, like me, to behold that young girl—that marvel of beauty, of grace, of intellect, and genius, already withered, and irretrievably and for ever blighted in that high feeling which makes beauty and grace, intellect and genius, the subject of ambition and lends them so many ineffable attractions.

"'Be comforted,' said she to us, taking a hand of each into hers, 'within this heart which every human misery has bled until it is dried up — within this heart in which love was slaughtered by precocious shame, there will always remain, as Bamboche used to say, *a little corner* of loving friendship for you both. But we forget that Martin must be impatient to hear what has happened to us.'

"'Ah! my friends,' said I to them, 'how often have I been engaged and taken up with these thoughts:—Where are they?—what has become of them?—by what sinister mishap were they torn from me, on that night when I was arrested after the robbery of Claude Gerard? For only fancy my despair, my friends, when on reaching the place of meeting we had fixed upon in case of pursuit, you know——'

"'Yes,' replied Bamboche, 'at the foot of a stone cross, situated at the top of the rising in the high-road.'

"'But since you had been taken prisoner, how did you contrive to come that evening to the meeting?' asked Basquine.

"'Thanks to the generous confidence of Claude Gerard; I will explain that by-and-bye. So then I arrived at the cross, and what did I see? The little shawl belonging to Basquine and a few pieces of money lying in a pool of blood.'

"'Tell him all,' said Basquine to Bamboche; 'he shall afterwards learn what befel me.'

"'I had just finished pocketing the schoolmas-

ter's money,' continued Bamboche, 'when I heard your signal of alarm. I wanted to go to your help——'

"'But I prevented him,' said Basquine; 'we should only have been lost without saving you, Martin, and I had thought of another project.'

"'You were right; Claude Gerard would very easily have overcome me and Bamboche.'

"'Perhaps not; I had my pistols,' continued the latter; 'I was resolved. There might have been a murder. What did occur was a thousand times preferable, although I was near losing my skin in the business. Well! I followed Basquine's advice. Seeing you taken, we fled away, skulking among the furze and way-thorns. We found, at the other end of the field, a pile of wood; I took out three or four pieces, and we squatted down in that hiding-place.'

"'Now this was my project,' said Basquine: 'we were first to expect you the whole night at the place of appointment; when, if you did not come, we should be satisfied you had been taken. We then resolved to go over the village the following day, either as beggars or street-singers; and, after learning your fate, to take our measures accordingly.

"'But the devil willed it otherwise,' resumed Bamboche.

"'Yes,' said I, 'the devil or the Rump-in-the-Bowl.'

"'What, you know that, do you?' exclaimed together Basquine and Bamboche.

"'Continue—continue, my friends.'

"'Well, you are perfectly right,' returned Bamboche; 'the Rump-in-the-Bowl decided it otherwise; for, as Basquine observed, there are singular fatalities. So, when night was come, we went and waited for you at the place of meeting: it was a fine moonlight evening. Seated at the base of the stone-cross, I was diverting myself by counting over our money in Basquine's shawl. The road was deserted; we thought we were alone; but suddenly a huge hand seized me with an iron grasp by the nape of the neck. 'Fly—fly, Basquine!——'

"'That was his first cry,' said the young girl.

"'My second cry was something like 'thunder of heaven!' And then I struggled with all my might to disengage myself and to draw out one of my pistols. I succeeded; but that rascally Rump-in-the-Bowl——'

"'I was not deceived,' said I to Bamboche. 'He had no doubt lain concealed behind the pediment of the stone-cross.'

"'Just so,' continued Bamboche. In the course of our struggle, the bandit snatched away my pistol at the very moment I had cocked it, and fired it in my ribs, here, on the right side, where I have a cicatrice large enough to thrust your thumb in. How I escaped being killed, God only knows.'

"'But the wretch—you have seen him since?' I exclaimed.

"'Certainly; he has been here three times to-day to ask for me: it 's he they call *the major*. Did n't you hear the porter mention his visit?'

"'Can you keep company with the ruffian?' I repeated in a tone of reproachfulness.

"'I keep company with much worse,' cried Bamboche. 'How can I help it? I practise the forgetfulness of injuries on a large scale; and of pistol-shots——So, having received from the Rump-in-the-Bowl such a sugar-plumb in my chest, I fell under the blow. Basquine ran off crying out 'murder! help!'—and the poor child was so dreadfully scared, that, losing her wits completely, she fled she knew not whither. In short, for a whole fortnight, she continued silly through fright. She will tell you about it; for it was immediately after that pistol-shot that she and I were separated for the first time.'

"'Poor Basquine!' said I, taking her hand within mine; 'and you, Bamboche, who saved you?'

"'A worthy carter, who was passing by with an empty cart, an hour after the event. He espied me weltering in my blood, like a corpse, and a few steps from the cross; he raised me up, put me into his cart, intending to convey me to a small town, some twelve or fifteen miles off, where there lived a surgeon. But, as we drew towards the town the next morning, some *gensdarme* happening to ride by the vehicle, the carter told him the matter. They applied first a bandage to my wound, and took me to the hospital of the adjoining town. I was cured there; and as I was obliged to confess that I had neither home nor means of living, they sent me to finish my term of convalescence in prison as a vagabond.'

"'In prison?' I exclaimed.

"'Yes,' resumed Bamboche, 'and I remained there till I was seventeen. You will readily conceive that I was then completed; for the contempt, the hardships of a gaol do n't mollify a man, when he is already as tough as hide; and the companionship of juvenile thieves is scarcely fitted to develope one's moral sense of right. Still I must do them justice; there are some good traits connected with the prison: be but a little bit of a vagrant or a pick-pocket, and you are safe to receive an education there which the greater number of poor children never obtain. In prison you are taught to read, write, and cipher, a little drawing, and a trade if you are without one. You carry with you a small saving, and very frequently, as soon as you are let out, you are provided with a place. Is not that an encouragement for a thief? However I did appreciate as I ought to have done the advantages of my situation. I first wanted to dash my brains out against the walls, and, when I had reflected a while, I wanted to break my fellow prisoner's head instead of my own, and at last I grew more composed and desisted from breaking any thing at all. I said to to myself: I am thirteen, that 's three years more; so let 's wait the three years out. You will wonder, Martin, to hear me say it, but really those three years passed away like a dream; for when once I had taken to reading, I became quite fond of reading and learning. The masters could do any thing with me, if they promised me a book. The quantity I read passes belief: I used to do in two hours a whole day's tasks, in order to gain time for reading. They saw I was strong and hearty, so the trade they taught me was that of a locksmith, and I struck the hammer like a Vulcan; but still the reason was that I might be allowed to devour my books. On the other hand, I must confess it in justice to myself and you, my friends, I did not contract any friendship in prison; the place was taken, I was strong, and some flattered me, but I only treated them with contempt. I was quarrelsome and had enemies, and those I defied. But as to friends, I repeat, I had none; I lived apart, in my gall. You will guess, Martin, what I must have become by the age of sixteen, especially if you add to all my ill-feelings the cruel anxiety I was in about you two, and the violence of my love for Basquine, which sometimes drove me crazy, for within the four walls of my prison, my passion became still more ardent than before we were parted,—thanks to the distance between us and the scenes which my memory recalled. I went out of prison hardened to evil, and morally broken like a tree twisted by the wind.'

"'Now I can understand,' said I to Bamboche, 'the reason of Claude Gerard's dread of imprisonment. To suffer you to be sent to prison, unhappy child, he said to me, when he had arrested me after the robbery we had committed, would be to corrupt and ruin you for ever.

"'Claude Gerard was right in that instance, as in so many others,' continued Bamboche: 'the downward shelve was formed, and effectually formed; on leaving the prison wherein I had become a tolerably good locksmith, I was immediately recommended

to a master. My path thus opened, I possessed a calling, and my understanding was kindled by education. With all that, I might have starved through poverty, like so many more—but still I had a chance; it was too late. The prison life had completely done for me; I hated work, and all my appetites, so long restrained, raged within me like a tempest. Nevertheless I hired myself to a master locksmith. He had a sister—she was a widow, of six and thirty—a coquette, but engaging, and rendered still more attractive by a fortune of 60,000 francs. If I did not labour hard in the shop, on the other hand I was facetious and chatty, and sang merry songs, made faces, and showed my old gymnastic feats, so that I soon turned the widow's head. One fine morning I carried her off; I threw away my blouse, and we lived like gentlefolks. That did not hinder me from thinking of Basquine and you. To undertake a journey in quest of you was my constant idea; but that required time and money, and the widow kept her thumb upon the purse: for the most loving women, when they are on the wane, do not like to confide too much to our discretion. All this was very base. My worthy Martin, I might have earned fifty sous or even three francs a day by working like a negro: but I had been so wretched in prison that——but it pains me to relate to you such villany. I now come to something you will like better, because in that instance I acted nearly well. In the meantime fortune threw me in the way of Basquine a second time—she was then thirteen.'

"Here several rude knocks at the door of the apartment interrupted Bamboche's narrative; he got up with looks of surprise and vexation, and went into the outer room, where Basquine and I overheard the following dialogue between him and the visitor through the door which opened on the staircase.

"'Who 's there?' inquired Bamboche.

"'I, the major.'

"'Be off to the devil and return to-morrow morning.'

"'It 's very urgent.'

"'That 's all the same to me.'

"'It 's about Robert de Mareuil; and La Levrasse has sent me.'

"'Now attend, Major: if you do n't instantly go down stairs of your own accord, I will come out and will drive you down rather more speedily than is suited to your venerable age.'

"'But I tell you, Captain, that it is so very urgent that——'

"'Major!' roared Bamboche in a thundering voice turning the key in the lock with a smart jerk, as if he were about to rush out.

"Probably this threat was effectual, for he double-locked the door again, saying:

"'That 's right.'

"And he returned into the room.

"'You know Count Robert de Mareuil, then?' said I, struck with what I had overheard.

"'I have that honour,' said Bamboche, with a mocking smile; 'what a blackguard he is!'

"'He?' I exclaimed.

"'I should think so.'

"'Are you sure of it?'

"'I know it, and will warrant you he is.'

"'We 'll speak hereafter of Count Robert again,' said I to Bamboche, after a moment's reflection. 'Continue your story.'

"'I will continue it instead of him,' replied Basquine; 'for he would not be able to tell you the good—the generous things he did for me.'

"'You say true, Basquine,' returned I, 'so begin.'"

CHAPTER XVIII.

BASQUINE, THE YOUNG DEBUTANTE, RELATES HER ADVENTURES SINCE THE SEPARATION OF THE THREE FRIENDS.

"THE closer I examined Basquine, the more I remarked in her present carriage and demeanour a finished elegance of manners, which at first I had not been struck with, and which, in some degree, reminded me of Regina—the only point of comparison I could judge by, my life up to that time having been passed in the most abject condition.

"The revelation of Basquine's talent had excited in me rather admiration than surprise: to me it seemed only the consequence, the natural development of her original gifts, so very manifest and remarkable in her childhood; but this grace, this refinement in her manners, which is only acquired by intercourse with polite company, how was it Basquine had obtained them? how was it her language had become correct, reserved, and frequently choice, sometimes eloquent and lofty?

"Bamboche, with his callous, jocular, and humorsome fancy, and his prison education, nurtured by abundant readings good and bad, spoke the style of language that was to be expected of him; and his careless action, his coarse and violent behaviour, consisted exactly with his speech; but, in the case of Basquine, whence proceeded that perfect harmony between the refinement of her manners and the delicacy of her language? By what means had she contrived to divest herself, so largely, of the vulgar, ignoble, and obscene instructions of Mother Bigbone, La Levrasse, and the Merry-Andrew, a horrible education that had polluted her infant years?

"This mystery which made my fancy very busy for the time, was soon to be explained.

"'You are going to hear Basquine now,' said Bamboche, 'and you will see what the poor darling pet has gone through. Compared with hers, my prison life was that of a voluptuary.'

"'I have always endured distress with patience and resignation,' said she; 'but humiliation, scorn, insult, oh! that it was which chiefly afflicted me.'

"She paused awhile, and then continued thus:

"'Attend, Martin, and you shall see that our several fates, though undoubtedly various, are all similar in their wretchedness. Bamboche has already told you, that on seeing him fall beneath the pistol-shot of the Rump-in-the-Bowl, I was nearly bewildered by dismay; I ran off crying out Help! murder! The ruffian ran after me to kill me, no doubt, but fright lent me wings; and having eluded the bandit's pursuit, I flung myself into a copse, and escaped his search. These recollections are all very scanty and uncertain now, for my terror had quite disturbed my reason. I spent the night squatted in that copse. At break of day, I issued forth and walked on at random; it afterwards appeared that I met a drover who was conducting his herd to the fair of Limoges.'

"'How! *it appeared you met?*' repeated I, surprised by the dubious expression.

"'I said—it appeared—my good Martin, because it was only several days after that meeting, that I gradually recovered from the stupefaction, the idiotcy into which the sight of Bamboche's supposed murder had plunged me. I then learned from the honest drover, the particulars of my meeting with him: the tinkling of the bells which were suspended to some of his cows attracted my attention; I went up to the herd, and accompanied it for some time even rendering some trifling services to the drover with a mere mechanical instinct, by helping his dogs to drive the cattle. The man took pity on me; he mistook me for an idiot who had been turned adrift. At nightfall, he gave me some supper and a good litter in the stable; at daybreak I was

afoot; and in spite of the snow which was falling heavily, I followed the drover. Several days passed away in this manner, during which, to the great and increasing surprise of my protector, my idiotcy gradually cleared off; my reason began to recover from the shock; finally, the day before we reached Limoges, after a night of deep and heavy sleep, I awoke perfectly restored after my long aberration. My first thought was to exclaim, as I looked round about me:—'Bamboche,—Martin?' Then only was it that I began to have a vague and indefinite consciousness of what had happened, quite astonished to find myself alone and lying in a stable. Between this return to reason, and the moment of Bamboche's supposed murder, there was a blank which I vainly endeavoured to fill up. The drover came in and said to me:

"'Come, my little girl, let us go forward.'

"I asked him what he wanted with me; how I happened to be in that stable; and related to him the adventure which had undoubtedly turned my head with dismay. The compassion of the honest fellow was increased; and he told me how he had met with me, and looked upon me as a poor forsaken idiot, turned piteously adrift. I then found from his explanations, that I was at that time full forty leagues from the spot where Bamboche had been killed, as I believed, and where you had been probably made prisoner, Martin. In spite of his kind feeling, the drover could not retain me in his company: his itinerant calling led him about from district to district; and after selling his herd of cattle, he was to buy a number of mules in the neighbourhood of Limoges. 'Still I cannot leave you, child, to starve on the road,' said he; 'the hostess of the inn I lodge at, when in these parts, is a good soul. I will beg her to take you in to assist in the kitchen; you will at any rate, until matters take a better turn, be provided with bread, and a roof to cover you.'

"'Well, we came on that evening into one of the suburbs of Limoges, at the inn usually frequented by the drover. His request in my behalf was rather coldly greeted, but at length she consented to keep me. Here I stayed some time, acting as servant to the other servants; living on their leavings, and lying in a stable at night. I thought Bamboche was dead; forty leagues were between me and where I had lost you, my good Martin; and however hard may have seemed to me my situation at Limoges, I durst not leave it to betake myself again, all alone, to a wandering life, such as we had led together. I had been living about a month in that hostelry, when a very strange adventure withdrew me from it.'

"And here Basquine, poor girl! hesitated to proceed.

"'Perhaps these confessions are too painful to you,' said I, observing that her countenance was overcast.

"'No——,' continued she, with her cold, bitter smile; 'no: often on the contrary, I recall the memory of this and many others. They serve to revive my courage, energy, and resolution. I draw therefrom new strength to proceed without remorse towards the end I mean to arrive at; and I will reach it—oh, yes! I will reach it one day——'

"I was struck with the inflexible determination with which Basquine uttered these few words, and with the gloomy lustre of her large eyes.

"'What end is that?' said I to her, at the same time glancing at Bamboche inquiringly.

"'I don't know,' he answered. 'It is three years since I have seen her, and she has never confided this aim to me,—have you, Basquine?'

"'No,' replied the girl. And thus she continued her relation:

"'I was, therefore, a servant to the servants of the inn. The house stood half-way up a rising hillock, where the carriages could move up but slowly. One day, when the hoar-frost which had fallen over night had made this rising almost insuperable, I happened to be seated on a bench outside the inn, when I saw first a courier ride by in red clothes, splendidly laced with gold; he scarcely preceded a train of carriages belonging, as I heard the people about observe, to the Duke of Castlebarry, an Irish nobleman, immensely rich, who was travelling with a numerous suite of retainers. He had sojourned for two days at Limoges, and his cooks had left the night before, with two waggons filled with provisions, in order to go and prepare his repast in the town he intended to put up at for the night.'

"'What luxury!' I exclaimed.

"'That was nothing, my poor Martin,' resumed Basquine; 'that very morning another waggon, carrying a portable set of furniture, attended by a valet-de-chambre, and an upholsterer, passed before this high and mighty lord, who by this means, when he arrived at any tavern, used to find several chambers prepared for him, and furnished with every comfort and costly magnificence.'

"'So much prodigality almost passes belief.'

"'The jolly dog understood life,' said Bamboche.

"'And what would you say, my good Martin,' continued Basquine, 'were I to describe to you a kind of carriage which closed the cavalcade, and which contained two saddle-horses, with their grooms, in case the duke should desire to travel part of the way on horseback?'

"'To let your horses travel by coach? What say you to that, Martin?' asked Bamboche.

"And as I stared at Basquine, without answering, and thinking she was playing upon my credulity, she resumed in a tone of irony:

"'No doubt this prodigal extravagance was outrageous; but the Duke of Castlebarry possessed 4,000,000 of francs annual income; and one of his suite afterwards told me that he had frequently seen in Ireland, on his grace's domains, whole families of labourers lying naked on filthy straw in their hovels, whilst the poor mother, or one of the daughters, was washing their sorry rags in the ditch. It can't be helped, my dear Martin: were it not for these contrasts, life would be very flat and tame.'

"This bitter sarcasm in a young girl of sixteen afflicted and terrified me. Basquine proceeded:

"'I was sitting, therefore, on the bench at the inn-door, looking with eager curiosity at that long train of carriages slowly advancing, when, suddenly the foremost vehicle, the duke's own carriage, was ordered to stop, by a message conveyed to the postillions by a servant on the coach-box. Then through the window in the carriage-door, I perceived two small, light blue eyes, the expression of which I never shall forget, bent with strange persistency, upon me. I saw nothing but that pair of eyes, for the face of the person looking at me so furiously was almost entirely concealed by the dense furs of a travelling dress, and the cap over his head.

All the cavalcade had stopped. In the course of a few minutes' waiting, and after the passage of several of the duke's retinue to and fro, each of whom, hat in hand, came up to the door of the fore-carriage, and received his master's instructions, I saw a lady, about thirty, with a pleasing countenance and an elegant address, alight from one of the carriages, walk up to the inn, and inquire for the hostess. 'Go and conduct the lady to our mistress, instead of staying there looking at the flies,' said one of the servants, pushing me roughly by the arm. 'That's just as I wished, my girl,' said the stranger-lady to the servant, in a very marked English accent; then taking me by the hand, she said to me in the most soothing manner imaginable: 'Show me to your mistress, child.' I did so. She remained a few moments closeted with the hostess, who said to me, after that interview: 'Little girl, I took you in out of charity; you have no shift to your back; we do n't know whence you come; you

have no relations. I cannot keep you long, because you eat more than you earn. This lady has taken a fancy to you—she pities you. If you like to go with her, you shall ride in a fine carriage, and be made very happy. Make up your mind directly. But, first I must give you warning, that if you refuse so lucky a chance, to-morrow I shall turn you out of doors, as true as that I tell you so.'

"'Poor child! how could you refuse such an offer, in your miserable plight?' said I to Basquine.

"'Of course I accepted it greedily,' she replied. 'And yet, it was not without a most unaccountable heaviness of heart, although it appeared to me a happy dream.'

"'The lady, whose name was Miss Turner, took hold of my hand, and having probably received orders not at that time to present me to the duke, she put me into her own carriage, and the long train once more moved forward.

"When I had partly recovered from my surprise, I looked about me: I was sitting in a handsome *berline* with four inside places, all of them occupied; for I was sitting between Miss Turner and a young negro-girl with most regular features, and not deformed and flat as they usually are in the blacks: her travelling mantle disclosed a costume of most charming fancy; around her naked arms, as polished as ebony, two silver bracelets were sparkling. In front of me, I beheld two other girls: the one, very fat, and with a complexion of dazzling whiteness, had very fair flaxen hair, clear blue eyes, and cheeks of roseate hue: she was a Fleming. The fourth girl within this travelling seraglio was not pretty, but her face was piquante, and she wore the strange coif and all the Sunday finery of a rich Parisian oyster-woman. Catherine (that was her name) was really and truly a girl picked up near the Hallis. She had the pert, bold, impudent manners of her tribe, and all her language was drawn from that forbidden vocabulary tolerated only at the carnival. Her coarse sayings had in them a certain degree of humour, and diverted the Duke of Castlebarry, who frequently after his bottle, would amuse himself with the brazen effrontery of this creature, picked up by the duke himself in one of the most murky dens in Paris.

"'Impossible,' cried I; 'such morals in our time!'

"'Poor Martin, he still wonders at any thing,' said she to Bamboche.

"'Basquine does not deceive you, nor does she even say all,' resumed Bamboche. 'That noble duke is no fanciful creation: he lived. I have met in the very low society I mix with, both the witnesses and the accomplices of his pranks.'

"'Such things will be, Martin,' continued Basquine with her cutting smile: 'a man comes into the world all-powerful through fortune, and high rank soon produces a satiety of things; then he wants novelty—strangeness. I only saw that day the poor young creatures who composed the duke's seraglio, for when once we had reached our destination, my life was very desolate and singular. At the next stage, Miss Turner, summoned to the duke, left me for a moment, returned soon after, and signed to me to follow her. I left the seraglio carriage, and alone with Miss Turner, installed myself in a calèche, usually occupied by the steward and secretary to the duke; but this time those important personages were obliged to place themselves where they could in other carriages of the train. In the first town we entered, Miss Turner bought me some suitable attire. I still continued to travel alone with her: we were served and waited on, separately, and I shared her apartment. Silent and reserved, that young woman only answered in monosyllables to my questions; and her replies, impressed, however, with a degree of deference, were nearly restricted to the following: 'Do n't be uneasy, Miss; his Grace will have you educated as if you were his daughter.—You do not know how happy you have been in meeting with his Grace. There is not a kinder, a more generous nobleman.'

"'All this is very singular,' said I to Basquine.

"'Stranger than you can conceive, Martin. However, when we had reached the duke's castle, I gave myself up completely to the delights of a state of well-being so very novel to me. Miss Turner's chambermaid attended on me; the duke's table was delicate and sumptuous beyond belief; but we used to take our meals apart. My health, so much debilitated by privation, became more flourishing every day. Miss Turner would praise my beauty to the skies, saying that a few days had rendered me quite another girl. I had an apartment elegantly furnished; you cannot form an idea of the luxury, the exquisite rarity of its decoration. Every day I took an airing in the carriage with Miss Turner, and we used to drive through a private park, where I was at liberty to run about and disport myself at all sorts of games. Frequently, too, Miss Turner made me get upon a pretty little pony, as mild and gentle as a dog; the daughter of the greatest noble could not, I should think, be more happy and petted than I was.'

"'And you had never yet seen the duke?' I inquired.

"'No. I was not presented to him until about three weeks after our arrival at the castle. It was a princely residence, and so admirably situated in the midst of one of the finest scenes in the south of France, that the temperature was as mild, people said, as at Hyerès, where the duke often spent a part of the winter.'

"'But why did they thus delay to present you to that man?' inquired I.

"'They were waiting for the arrival of several boxes of dresses forming a magnificent *trousseau*, ordered for me at Paris, from the most fashionable makers. Before I proceed, I must tell you, Martin, that Miss Turner was a person of most refined manners, and that she had continually corrected me with gentleness and firmness in respect to my want of decorum, and the gross language I was wont to utter. I studied to please her, and to observe her directions. The day before I was introduced to the Duke of Castlebarry, she said to me: 'You are now become almost a perfect lady, in manners and politeness; I hope that his grace will be very well satisfied at the progress you have made under my tuition.'

"'The day of introduction came at last. I was decked out, agreeably to the duke's orders, in a strange manner: my hair, parted on my brow, fell down in long tresses over my neck and shoulders; my arms were naked; I wore a magnificent frock of embroidered Indian muslin, with trousers of the same stuff; white silk stockings, and black satin shoes. By dint of hearing Miss Turner and the chambermaid repeat that I was lovely in that toilet, I believed it, and looked at myself complacently in the mirror, in my dressing-room; and I confess I felt pleasure in the contemplation. 'Now,' said Miss Turner to me, in her most serious and strait-laced manner, taking a *splendid doll* out of a box, 'here is a doll that his grace has given you as a present; you must go and thank him yourself—you understand?'—'Yes, Miss Turner,' said I, admiring the toy, a truly marvellous piece of workmanship, and not daring to touch it. 'Take your doll,' said my *governess*. 'But,' answered I, 'are we not going to see his grace?'—'Yes, miss, we are; and he has desired you to bring your doll along with you.' Greatly surprised, I acknowledge, by this recommendation, I followed my governess to his grace.'

"This latter part of Basquine's story completely mystified me; and in my simplicity I said to the girl—

"'These attentions and that education testified at all events that the duke was not a bad man.'

"Basquine stared at me in amazement, and then burst out into a peal of derisive laughter which made me shudder.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HORRIBLE VOLUPTUARY AND HIS APPALLING MISDEEDS.

"'BEFORE continuing this fearful narrative, my good Martin, and in order to prepare you to hear things you will scarcely believe,' continued Basquine, 'tell me—have you ever heard of the adventures of *good* King Louis XV. and Miss Tiercelin?'

"'No,' I answered, rather surprised at the question; 'I do n't know that story.'

"'Whilst I was staying at the castle,' replied Basquine, 'I chanced to meet with several books which treated of the reign of Louis the *Well-Beloved*. This is the story: That good king was passing one day on foot through the Tuileries, when he noticed in the garden a little girl, not above eleven years of age — observe, Martin—*not above eleven years old*. She was the daughter of a Paris citizen, named *Tiercelin*, who lived on his income. The king took a fancy to the child, and she was laid in the royal couch by the Marchioness of Pompadour, a most indulgent rival, as you perceive.'

"'How infamous!' cried I amazed. Basquine pursued her narrative with ironical sedateness.

"'Louis XV. was—a rare event with him—faithful and constant during two years to the little Tiercelin. That fidelity dismayed the lords and ladies of the court, and in consequence of some intrigue of the Duke of Choiseul's, the poor child was thrown into the Bastille, together with her father. They were kept fourteen years in that prison.*

"'And therefore history styles him the *Well-Beloved!*' resumed Bamboche, bursting out into a loud peal.

"'The moral of all this,' continued Basquine, with her accent of bitter mockery, 'is that Louis XV. was but a tyro—a mere tyro compared to the Duke of Castlebarry; and it would have been better for me to have spent fourteen years in prison than to have lived as I did live—in the luxurious abode of that rich nobleman.'

"Terrified by the young girl's looks, when she uttered her last speech, I exclaimed—

"'Did he then detain you forcibly, that man?'

"'No,' said she; 'I stayed there of my own accord.'

"And then, as I appeared not to understand the inconsistency of her language, she proceeded in this manner—

"'Well as I was saying, I was taken to be presented to the duke. Dressed in a magnificent child's frock, carrying my fine doll in one hand, I gave the other to *my governess;* and we crossed through a magnificent picture gallery, then through several splendid saloons, until we reached the duke's private apartment. Excepting his two confidential valets, none of the duke's retainers ever entered these apartments. My governess, after stopping short before a door covered with red velvet, rang in a peculiar manner; one of the two confidential servants opened the door, and spoke a few words to Miss Turner in English, and she then consigned me to the hands of this new-comer, saying—'Corso, —(that was the name of the Italian valet)—will take you to his grace. Be very good, and mind you behave like a little lady, and remember all I have told you.'

"'The door was then closed upon my governess, and I remained alone with that Corso, whose face, at once effeminate and tanned, his penetrating and coal-black eyes, made me shrink from his looks. If miss you will follow me,' said he, 'I will usher you to his grace.' And thereupon, Corso led me through an outer saloon, then through a kind of *boudoir* entirely sheeted with glass, with a looking-glass ceiling and part of the floor. Corso applied his hand to a spring that I did not perceive: a frame of glass slid back in a groove, and I followed my guide with increasing uneasiness into a passage completely darkened, and over-laid with thick carpets in which the sounds of our footsteps were subdued. A few minutes after, a door opened, Corso gave me a slight shove, and when I turned suddenly about towards my guide, he was gone; nor could I distinguish the entrance which had admitted me. Never in my life shall I forget that scene: I was standing in a kind of rotunda hung round with black drapery sashed with silver edges and lighted by a funeral lamp likewise in silver; the penetrating odour of the strongest and most agreeable perfumes filled this sepulchral chamber, furnished with a kind of circular bench in polished ebony, without pillows or cushions. In the middle of the rotunda stood a table overlaid with a black velvet cover, embroidered with silver like the pall over a coffin; on the top of the table I saw with astonishment a *little household* of wonderful richness, every article in this miniature service was in gold, decorated with enamel and fine pearls; I noticed especially a soup-dish as large as a common cup, a true masterpiece of workmanship: nothing was wanting, from dishes of all sizes down to the cruet-stands and decanters of rock crystal, as large as smelling-bottles, and saltcellars no larger than a pea.

"'And the labourers on that man's estates, pent up half-naked in their hovels, contended with swine for their victuals,' said I to her.

"'Those people, my worthy Martin,' said Bamboche, 'bring up, feed, and *preserve* their game at great cost, but they do n't care to preserve their labourers.'

"'I was at once dazzled and frightened at what I saw,' continued Basquine. 'I perceived farther off on a shelf of black marble, a complete set of kitchen tackle in silver all in the same proportion as the service. A large chafing-dish, beneath which spirits of wine were burning, was intended to serve as a fire-place and stove. There was nothing in these puerile preparations to create alarm; but the deep silence that pervaded the room hung with black cloth, began to frighten me, when one of the skirts

* The character of Louis XV. is well known to all readers of history. He was a complete sensualist, like one of our recent kings; and although he had for his tutor, when a boy, one of the purest spirits that ever walked this world, the great pulpit orator, Massillon, he grew up a most licentious *roué*. He always had children among his mistresses.

Eugene Sue does not tell us whether the father was a *participes criminis* in the ruin of his child, although the state of public morals at that period, and the incarceration of Tiercelin along with his daughter, leaves but little reason to doubt of it. Such cases are very common in France, even at this day. Many a father and mother, in the gay city of Paris, lives by the wages of sin earned by their daughters, who, if they are pretty, are introduced to vicious habits at an age so precocious that they do not, and cannot, appreciate what virtue is, and live without knowing shame. Amongst the French actresses who are annually imported into England, and frequently at the suggestion of aged English noblemen, there are girls of sixteen or seventeen who can hardly read, and cannot write, who are settled, whilst they stay amongst us, in the most expensive lodgings, and go to rehearsal in their own carriages. Who can expect the theatres of France and England to continue respected when such creatures are glorified in their infamy? Who can expect young women to cling to good habits and good morals like the penitent to his cross, when vice is so largely rewarded? It is not many years ago that an English nobleman, of very high rank, was currently reported to have bought, as his concubine, a young ballet girl, and to have made a settlement on the poor child, with the sanction and in the presence of her own father. The theatres of Paris and London are considered by the rich libertine as open to his purchase, as the slave-market of Constantinople. Indeed the stages of some play-houses are quite as notorious, and far less under control, than the Quadrant.

of the hangings was raised. Then truly, I thought I was dreaming. I saw enter, a-straddle on one of those large rocking-horses,—superb toys made to move by a secret spring,—I saw enter a man of middle size, rather corpulent, and seemingly about sixty; he had on a fair light haired wig, a large shirt collar turned over a very short jacket to which his trousers were buttoned on;—in a word, that singular man was dressed like a boy of my own age. To complete the illusion no doubt, he was blowing with all his might into a small tin trumpet. Thus mounted and accoutred, he rode round the rotunda, on his large rocking-horse.'

"Was there no thunder,
Red with uncommon wrath to smite the man?"

"'Fortunately he was mad!' exclaimed I, breathing again after a pause of dreadful agony.

"'Mad?' said Basquine, looking at me. She then added, glancing at Bamboche, 'Yes, my good Martin, he was mad.'

"She was silent a few moments, and then proceeded—

"'The duke—for he it was—used sometimes to be smitten with a mania which bordered on madness. My first impression, at the sight of that grotesque old man, altered like a boy, and playing like one, was to laugh outright. But the shout meeting no echo in that deep and gloomy solitude,—for the duke having finished his ride, had alighted from his horse, and silent—immoveable, was glaring at me with his small light blue eyes, which glistened in the middle of his blood-red visage,—terror seized on me again and grew to its height; for that which at first had appeared to me so funny and odd, now seemed more dreadful every minute; so I began to cry and shriek.'

"'Indeed it was terrible,' said I to Basquine. 'I feel it like a horrid dream.'

"'It required,' she resumed, 'the tender and fatherly soothings of his grace, who spoke French very well, to appease me and restore me to confidence. When he found I was composed, he changed his manner at once, and without in the least alluding to his finding me on the high road, or to the care which had been taken of me since, he said to me, affecting the voice and accents of childhood, 'You must call me *Toto*; we are going to dress our little dinner. You have got there a fine doll! and so have I got some nice playthings. I will show them to you after dinner.'

"Here I looked with an air of stupefaction at Basquine, hardly able to believe what I had just heard. She proceeded with her cutting smile:

"'And Toto, a duke and peer of England, enjoyed, of course, in the world of fashion, all the consideration, and all the authority which belong to an illustrious name and an immense fortune; besides, as he had deigned to represent his country in some state embassy, two or three sovereigns had striped him with their finest ribbons. However,' added Basquine, more contemptuously still, 'when he was not attired as Toto, the duke had a venerable and serious aspect. For, one evening, I chanced to see him walking in his picture-gallery, arm-in-arm with the archbishop of the neighbouring town; his grace being a very good Catholic, and every Sunday mass was performed at the castle. The duke, I say, walked proudly along with head erect, wearing the blue ribbons over his white waistcoat, and a plate of diamonds on his black coat. And really, in that mighty nobleman, I never should have recognised Toto, with whom I had taken that first little dinner.'

"'Oh! if we could but turn them inside out, and examine a goodly number of respectable old men, above all, your old political libertines, the most depraved of any,' cried Bamboche, 'what a host of Totos we should see beneath these masks of gravity.'

"'To return to my first little dinner,' continued Basquine; 'we took it in the small gold service, after having dressed the miniature dinner in the silver saucepans, on the stove heated with spirits of wine. Very soon, strange to say, the tastes and merry joy of my age got the better of me; and at length I began to be much diverted by this pastime. My comrade, Toto, showed himself very expert and clever in this children's cookery. Immediately after dinner, Toto displayed before me all his playthings; some of them were admirable—and very uncommon—true masterpieces of mechanism. They must have cost immense sums. But suddenly Toto breaking off in the heat of his display, said to me with a mournful look:

"'It is near three o'clock—Babonne is coming for me to learn my lesson. How vexatious! Good bye till to-morrow.'

"'Such was my first interview with the Duke of Castlebarry; for, having no doubt pulled an invisible bell, the secret door through which I had entered was opened. Corso appeared; and, at a signal from his master, conducted me out by the same way I had taken to arrive, after which he delivered me over to Miss Turner, who had been waiting for me outside the private apartment. When, still all wondering at what I had witnessed, I related these strange doings to my governess, she cut my tale short, saying to me with a severe frown, 'Once for all, miss, not a word about that, neither to me nor any body else, or you will forfeit his grace's kindness.' This first little dinner was ridiculous only,' resumed Basquine, 'but the ludicrous was a forerunner to the horrible.'

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"And truly in my ingenuous simplicity I had said to Basquine: that man was mad. The sequel to our conversation, which my pen dares not relate, proved to me that the duke was one of those monsters impelled by frightful monomania, and the satiety, and too early abuse of every pleasure which countless riches can obtain, those riches being acquired without labour, from the age of boyhood, by the mere act of inheritance.

* * * * *

"'As for the rest,' continued Basquine, 'my governess, Miss Turner, seeming entirely ignorant of what was doing, ever silent, reserved, and fixedly sedate, cultivated my education with a perseverance and a zeal incited by her obedience to her master's directions. She taught me to read and write; to sing, to play on the piano, and to draw; she taught me history and geography. Had I been, as she expressed herself, the duke's own daughter, my education could not have been attended to with more skilful care.'

"'The most dreadful part of it,' cried I, 'is to convert an action, generous in itself, into the fulfilment of the most depraved desires, and thus to carry on, side by side, the development of the understanding, and the most detestable poilution.'

"'True,' replied Basquine; 'for whilst one-half of my life was spent in study, and a kind of severe seclusion, the other half was passed in a hell, the frightful remembrance of which will haunt me until death.'

"'And did you never try to escape?' said I to her.

"'I did not attempt it,' she returned, in a state of excitement; 'for at that period I conceived, for the first time, the aim that I am resolved to reach, and which reach I will,' she added, with a gloomy and despondent resolution.'

"'I do not understand you,' Basquine.

"'Hear me, Martin. You have seen me very miserable, have you not? You witnessed my grief when I was torn from the arms of a dying father; you know how wretched was my childhood—how ill-treated and polluted:—we have been mountebanks, vagrants, thieves together. Well, in spite of all that early degradation, I had still, at least, preserved at the bottom of my soul some floating

remorse, some lingering aspirings to a life less infamous. You have not forgotten that night in our island——'

"'Oh! no—no!' exclaimed I.

"'There are not many of those recollections,' said Bamboche, 'and we keep them locked up in the heart.'

"'Well,' resumed Basquine, with excitement, that kept increasing as she spoke, 'at that time I still respected myself enough to endeavour to palliate my conduct, by saying inwardly: it was an evil fate—it was desertion that made me what I am. But, after a short stay at the duke's, I was so dreadfully degraded by that *monster*, that I lost the sense, the remorse of that last utter degradation. But then, as fast as education expanded my intellect, there was aroused within me a want, a thirst for vengeance, which every day increased and grew stronger. It became my one fixed and settled thought. From that moment I resigned myself with sinister delight to my condition. I performed prodigies of labour; all the time I was mistress of, I employed in study, that I might require, as far as my nature would allow me, those amiable talents, those refined, seductive manners, which impart so much power to women. The duke, in his refined and diabolical depravity, encouraged my taste for self culture. He sent, and obtained for me, at a prodigal expense, a first-rate singing and music-master, who, so to speak, had created the most distinguished artists, and whose works are now celebrated. But, in respect to that artist,' continued Basquine, gently smiling, 'listen, my dear Martin, to an anecdote which will dilate your heart, and give you a moment's respite amidst the many horrors I have to relate. In the opinion of the professor I speak of, an excellent and worthy man, if there be one, I passed for the adopted daughter of the duke, for I should have died with shame had my honoured teacher suspected what I really was. He admired all the more the apparent solicitude which tended me; that he, himself, was indebted, he told me, for his good fortune, to a being as generous as he was mysterious. 'I was endowed with the sacred fire,' said the artist, 'but I was poor, utterly unknown, without any means; the very things I required to study with were wanting, for I had hardly any bread to eat. One day I saw a man enter my dark attic beneath the roof; he was rather old, ill-clad, harsh of aspect, rude in his discourse, and had a piercing eye that penetrated to your soul. His questions proved to me that he knew all the particulars of my life and my vocation, and the consequence of his visit was the settlement of a pension, which, in effect, enabled me to study, to toil—to make myself known, and lastly, to gain a reputation; unfortunately, I never could thank my benefactor, for I never saw him save that once.' 'But do you know his name?' said I to the teacher. He replied: 'He said his name was Mr. Just; and the agent at whose office I collected my allowance, would never tell me any thing more respecting that strange, good man.'

"'Mr. Just?' cried Bamboche, here interrupting Basquine. 'This is, indeed, a strange coincidence.

"'How so?' inquired we.

"'A young painter, whom I was acquainted with during my days of prosperity, and who is now very renowned, related to me that he owed his good fortune to the generous assistance of a mysterious patron, and whose name was Mr. Just.'

"'No doubt it was the same person!' exclaimed I.

"'Probably so,' resumed Bamboche, 'for, a short time after the young painter's career, the best and most worthy fellow in the world he was too, (though an acquaintance of mine) had been secured, a young sculptor, an artist full of promise, but immersed in the most hopeless misery, was, like the young painter, miraculously saved and assisted by that devil of a Mr. Just, who never showed himself to either but the first time—and who must be nevertheless pretty well informed, and have a very fine scent, to be able so well to distribute his benefits, for the young sculptor, his *protégé*, is already rising very fast to eminence.'

"'Oh! thank you Basquine, thank you Bamboche,' cried I breathing more freely; 'that does one good, it quiets the heart to hear of such fine, such noble deeds. No, no: all men do not become depraved by opulence; there are a few great souls who make a priesthood of wealth for, God be praised! if there are some Dukes of Castlebarry, there are likewise some Mr. Justs! Oh! what would I not give,' exclaimed I with enthusiasm, 'to behold that great man of good!'*

CHAPTER XX.

CAPTAIN BAMBOCHE RECOUNTS HIS EXPLOITS.

"'ALAS! my worthy Martin,' said Basquine to me, 'I must draw you down from Elysium again and replunge you into the abyss below, by the sequel; with such a teacher as the one I have described to you and whom I had to direct my studies for three months, you may suppose I made rapid progress. What I am going to say, may appear absurd; and yet nothing can be truer or more fully prove the strength of my will. I had no *humour*; I resolved to acquire the gift. In order to detect in what it consisted, I read—I studied the most remarkable comic writers, and I drew at least from this commerce a sort of jargon which might delude inferior judges; for the duke, who had known in his numerous travels the first spirits in Europe, said to me one day quite bewildered: I believe, God help us! that this little puss is turning sprightly. But don't be alarmed, Martin,' added Basquine with a melancholy smile, 'I shall never play off my wit upon you.'

"'But the vengeance you were pursuing!' said I to her.

"'That vengeance,' cried she, 'to secure it, I was obliged to labour every day to acquire those talents, those advantages, those attractions which would one day prove fearful weapons in my hands—not against the duke—that was impossible; but against the whole of that race of idlers, stupid, insolent, and infamous, of whom the duke was the type as to old age, and little Scipio as to youth.'

"'I began to understand you, Basquine,' said I, struck with the implacable expression of the young girl's features as she spoke.

"'O! merciless race!' exclaimed she, with terrible excitement, 'O! whilst you were gorged with superfluity, my honest father was dying of hunger and pain—and I was bought, a mere child, for a few pieces of money. O! your detestable disregard as to our lot,—us miserable wretches,—suffered me to wither at that sacred age when the most abject and criminal have been pure! O! when I held out to you a hand still innocent, though polluted—you repulsed me. O! ye mighty nobles worn out with lust, you made me the toy and the victim of your

* As there are many praiseworthy people who have been put to the pain of reproaching this great novelist, for some very wicked and flagrant characters he has drawn, though he portrayed them with a good object which they had not discerned—here is an opportunity to show their sympathy with good, by going about seeking for suffering merit, and emulating Mr. Just by raising it entirely and at once above need by one superhuman act of generosity. The gold that lies in the bank cellars, if multiplied a thousand times, could not pay what the rich owe to suffering merit; and if any set of men can undo the accumulated mischief of ages of misrule, it must be that numerous body of unrewarded spirits who in various ways incite the minds of men to thoughts above the flesh, and to actions which carry in them the scent and perfume of hereafter.—*Translator's note.*

bloody debaucheries, taking an infernal delight in cultivating my understanding the more in proportion as you degraded my body. O! you have heaped upon me outrages, opprobrium and torture! O! the contagion of your horrible perverseness corrupted me to the marrow of my bones, and I was not twelve years old! But wait—wait one day I shall be sixteen, the age of innocence and candour—the age at which beauty shines in all its lustre; the age which shadows forth the attractions, the talents I have acquired, and shall still acquire; wait, only wait, and then fortified by the vices you have imparted to me, fortified by the deadly hatred you have inspired me with, fortified by my heart so early blighted—fortified by my senses extinguished before the age at which they should be kindled, fortified above all by the contempt, the horror, that your race provokes—within me—wait, and you shall see with what burning, mad, and lustful passions I shall be able to inflame you. O! one day you shall love me, and I shall be avenged.'

"The attitude, the action, the countenance of Basquine whilst she delivered this fearful imprecation were stamped with a resolution so formidable, that I exclaimed involuntarily—

"'Basquine, you terrify me!'

"She swept her hand over her forehead all covered with a feverish redness, was silent a moment, and then said to me:

"'Excuse me, Martin, for giving way to such explosions of passion, but with you and Bamboche I seek neither to dissemble nor to constrain myself. I continue. I have now little left to relate. An unforeseen event drove me from the duke's house. He died suddenly of apoplexy. His nephew, already rich, but equally covetous, as rigid as his uncle had been prodigal and debauched, turned out of the castle all the women the duke had collected therein, and to whom he had left no legacy. Miss Turner alone had saved a considerable hoard. She preserved her habitual composure when she saw me turned adrift like the other poor wretches in the seraglio; however, she gave me twenty francs and a very fine guitar on which she had taught me to play. 'Child,' said she, 'with this means of earning a livelihood, your pretty face, twenty francs in your pocket, a good dress and a small bundle of linen, you need not be afraid.'

"Thus it was I quitted the castle of the old duke at the beginning of summer, having but one aim, to go to Paris, and already thinking of the stage, where I might best be able, by dint of toil, zeal, and perseverance, to reach the first step in the position I anticipated—a fixed, obstinate, ardent idea like

vengeance. My journey from the south up to Paris was accomplished without any remarkable incident; the weather was generally splendid, and thanks to my guitar, on which I accompanied my songs in the coffee-houses and other public resorts in the several towns I passed through, I possessed on my arrival here about twice as much as what I owed to Miss Turner's generosity. Soon chance brought me into the way of Bamboche; I thought my heart had been dead—quite dead; and yet, at the sight of our early companion, I shuddered with delight, with joy, and hope.

"'When I met her,' said Bamboche, 'I was living with my *widow*, the sister of my employer; so, of course, I left the widow.'

"'Yes,' said Basquine, 'and so long as I lived with him, he took himself to his work and toiled as a locksmith, in order to support me, because he would not through jealousy allow me to go and play the guitar at the coffee-houses.'

"'That's so like him,' said I, to Basquine.

"'But,' resumed Bamboche with a look of sorrow: 'she does not tell you all the troubles she had to bear from me during that time: my savage behaviour, my violence caused by my jealousy and by——'

"'Where's the use of telling Martin of those distressing recollections?' said Basquine, interrupting our companion. 'You were not mistaken when you complained, Bamboche, not of my want of affection, but of my coldness. I loved no other, it is true—but I no longer loved you as you wished to be loved. When I met you again, I had believed at first that I felt the revival of that unhappy love of my childhood. I was deceived; sentiments which are rebellious to nature cannot return: the wonder is they should have any existence. And then, you see, Martin, I was exclusively possessed by the ambition of self-improvement in my profession; an inward voice assured me that by it alone I should accomplish my end, the vengeance I was pursuing then as I pursue it now, with invincible obstinacy, with a blind confidence in the future; the jealousy, and continued reproaches of Bamboche on account of the little love I showed him, afflicted and grieved me. I should have been a thousand times happier had he been satisfied, as I implored him to be, with a sisterly affection; but his besetting persecution, his outbreaks of passion became at length intolerable; for my coldness stung him acutely, and my daily troubles were so many obstacles between me and my ultimate aims. So one evening——'

"'When I returned home after my work,' resumed Bamboche interrupting Basquine; 'she had vanished. Since that day—I have never seen her till to-night.'

"'And since then, what have you been doing?' inquired Basquine with affectionate interest, 'tell us the story, for as to me, you shall always be my brother as well as Martin. In whatever position we may be never shall we three be otherwise then friends—oh! that I am sure of. I attest our recent emotion and the unchangeable attachment we have preserved for one another—we shall be faithful to the pledges of our childhood.'

"'Oh yes! for ever!' exclaimed I, as well as Bamboche.

"And each of us took hold of one of Basquine's hands.

"After a short silence, I said to Bamboche:

"'Continue your narrative. After the sudden departure of Basquine, what became of you?'

"'I thought for some time I should have lost my senses, so much was I exasperated by her desertion. I loved her, Martin, as I have never loved any one else, and shall never love again. The proof of which is that for her sake I had nurtured feelings of delicacy, which suit me, as satin shoes would suit an ox; for, instead of working like mad, when I met Basquine again, I might have returned to my widow and drawn from her more money than ever I earned by slaughtering myself, to support us both, all the time she stayed with me. Well! I could not—no—to support Basquine on my widow's bread—I did not relish the idea; whilst for any one but Basquine it would have fitted me like a kid glove! I tell you, Martin, that for all save you and her I must draw up the ladder behind me and bid adieu to all good feelings.'

"'Confess, though,' said I to him, 'that it is already a noble thing to see our mutual affection call up such feelings—however few and limited they may be?'

"'Few and limited they are, I promise you; so after Basquine's departure, I betook myself once more to my wings, as a bird of prey. About that time too I fell in with La Levrasse. 'Ah! old villain!' said I to him, 'you are still alive, then?' 'Oh! you big rascal,' returned he, 'so you wanted to bake me in my carriage?' 'What then? was your precious hide too thick to be cooked? I do n't wonder at it. But poor mother Bigbone was more *tender*, you know,' 'you wicked profligate,' answered La Levrasse. 'She was perfectly roasted, and done brown.'

"'My God!' cried I; 'and the man-fish? for I had often thought of him since our separation.'

"'True," said Basquine. 'Poor Leonidas! he, too, was shut up in the carriage when you set it on fire? Did La Levrasse give you any tidings of him, Bamboche?'

"'The man-fish escaped, La Levrasse told me; but that scoundrel Longleak, the Merry Andrew, was stifled by the smoke. Bamboche then proceeded:

"'La Levrasse was already settled as a toyman in the Passage Bourg l'Abbé; but he lent money, as he said, by way of amusement. 'Come,' said I, 'I forgive you; you have had but one cheek fried and shrivelled—it's not much damage; let us say no more about it.' 'So, you forgive me, do you?—That 's your sort,' returned the juggler; 'and to show you how sensible I am to your clemency, I invite you to dine with me to-morrow—we 'll have a quiet chat.' I did not miss the appointment; the old scoundrel studied and observed me, set me a talking; and, at the dessert, over our cheese, he said to me: 'Hear me. I lend money; and, as a broker, I often buy up, for a mere song, certain debts that are legally claimable, but hard to recover: sometimes because the parties have fled to foreign countries; at others, the cunning blades have found means to secrete their goods. Hitherto, for want of a clever partner, I have not made the most of these matters; and yet they might be converted into mines of gold. For instance, here is one amongst others: I gave 15,000 francs for a debt of 72,000, against one Mr. Rondeau. He is well able to pay. He has collected full 700,000 francs in cash, and cut to England with the pelf, and there the jolly dog is living in clover. By law I can do nothing, for this is a case which would not induce the British government to give him up; but by having recourse to *moral compulsion*——'

"'What!' cried I.

"'Suppose, friend Bamboche, that I make you a present of the claim, all regularly drawn up, you who have not a penny in the world? What would you do, knowing that on the otherside of the straits there is a merry cove who can pay, and who—I must not forget to tell you—is as great a coward as a mooncalf.'

"'Pardieu!' said I to La Levrasse, 'the matter is plain. I would go to my debtor, take him by the nose, and thrash him soundly until he dubbed up the coin.' 'There is something good in your plan,' returned La Levrasse; but in England, as well as in France, they impound a creditor who argues with a cudgel, but they do not grab a creditor who, I suppose, shall continually follow his debtor through

the streets, in the parks, in the theatres, saying to him aloud, with all due courtesy of look and manner:

"'Sir, you owe me legally 72,000 francs; you have the means of paying me; you must not refuse me, or you might be taken for a cheat. Now, before such a plague, such a nightmare, the debtor must yield. How much will you give me?' said I to the juggler; 'and in a week from this day I will bring this Mr. Rondeau to book.' 'I will bear the expenses of your journey, and give you 5,000 francs. Come, don't stare so. I will give you 10,000; nay, don't shake your stick; say 15,000—you will receive them from the agent, to whom Rondeau shall pay the money. So let it be 15,000 francs.' I set out for London; a week after La Levrasse fingered the cash, and I my share. When I saw myself master of so great a sum, I said to myself: 'I must find out Martin, and let him have a slice.'

"'True-hearted Bamboche!'

"'Claude Gerard would not allow it. It was an ill-starred journey; yes, fearfully unfortunate,' added Bamboche; and much to my suprise, his face was suddenly overspread with gloom.'

"'Why unfortunate?' said I to him, seeing that he had grown silent and thoughtful.

"'Because I did not meet with you, Martin; and also——'

"'And also?'

"'Cursed— sylum,' he muttered in an undertone.

"'At the moment, that speech appeared to me inexplicable; I therefore said to Bamboche:

"'Explain your meaning.'

"'No,' he resumed with a start; 'what the devil was I thinking of? Claude Gerard not consenting to let you go,' continued Bamboche, 'I returned to Paris; and then, faith! let the wind blow; but as it usually happens that none but vagabonds like me have any luck, as soon as I came down to my last remaining thousand franc note, I went to play at No. 113, and in two days I won 50 000 francs. I felt your loss, worthy Martin, more than ever, because I had now a still larger sum to spend. I say the same to you, Basquine. Had I only known where to find you.'

"'I believe you, Bamboche,' said Basquine; 'to share with me the money you had gained so easily, what was that compared to the rough toil of a mechanic which you had borne so long for my sake?'

"'That's true; it was not so difficult to gain my 50,000 francs. Instead of using the file and the hammer all day, a few scraps with the rake over the green cloth, and the piastres were collected.

"'Then, by my word! did n't I go it! A superb apartment, horses, carriages, open table, and an alphabet of petticoats from Amelia in A to Zelia in Z! I called myself Captain Hector *Bambochio!* a title that I had invented on hearing old La Levrasse speak of Texas, where he had plotted some scheme. Whilst I was thus going full swing, I adopted a supposed marquis as my father, and a Spanish grandee as my father-in-law. Too strange to say, though the world is full of cheats and tricksters of both sexes, the greatest liar is the most believed; not that people attach credit to all he says—he does not expect it; but, because after deducting a great part of his pretences, they still give him credit for a large balance. Well, during a year, I led a gambler's life; and it resembled by its feelings and excitement as closely as two drops of water, our former wandering life as beggars. But all human things have an end as well as a beginning, even good luck: the *red* had long treated me as a spoiled child; it forsook me, like mother Bigbone, after our amour; then I wanted to faddle with the black, but the black proved a hundred times as treacherous. I had already tumbled down from my fine apartment in the Rue Richelieu into a low, paltry hotel, in the Rue de Seine. There I jogged on for some time by getting up duels between my neighbours, the students, and their friends. I used to offer them my services as a second: breakfasting by the pistol—dining by the sword, and supping by the broadsword. I must tell you that I was fond of fencing, and so clever with the foils, that in eighteen months Bertrand—the incomparable Bertrand—whose fencing-room I frequented, as a young fellow of family had turned me out, not an elegant, skilful, accurate swordsman, as he so often does—my wild and curbless nature would not allow it; but, as a left-handed fencer, a most dangerous and fearless adversary. That reputation, practically formed and settled by a duel, in which I had ripped up the belly of a mulish creditor, who was himself a terrible bully and man-eater, was singularly favourable to me in my pursuits as La Levrasse's collector; but by degrees his budget of hard debts was exhausted; my neighbours, the students, had each fought his man. They had turned me out of the hotel. I was quite on my beam-ends, and ready to do any thing and every thing, when I met the Rump-in-the-Bowl—that black Mentor of my youth. The worthy had settled down; he was *pawing* for a smuggling dodge of cigars, stuffs, liquors, and the deuce knows what! I knew a tidy lot of people, more black sheep than white, so I took upon me to plant his booty among the natives, for a consideration. I lived on, lodging the while at the COMPANY'S depôt, Blind Alley Renard, but the mine was sprung. There were no proofs against me. I cut. I was ruminating on something desperate, when a thought came into my head. I am strong and robust, six feet high, said I to myself,—I will sell myself as a substitute soldier. The moment I am bought, I will stake the purchase money. If I win I will substitute myself; if I lose—I 'll become a soldier, and get killed for insubordination. Then, what uncertain things cards are. Just like women. The *red* coquettes with me again. I won 10,000 francs; I bought a substitute, and once more I mounted my steed. The old scoundrel, La Levrasse, had another budget of debts; and he added to that the attraction of lending money to young men of family, whom he knew to be expectants of property after *father's* death. The new luck at the tables allowed me to mingle in a company certainly rather promiscuous; and there it was I threw my bait to catch flats. The Rump-in-the-Bowl lend a hand too. I made him my *sub.*—and out of respect for his grey hairs, I conferred upon him the title of major. Whenever we meet with ricketty creditors, he goes forward as a scout, and examines the ground. Such, my children, is the state of my business. In that secretary yonder I have got 5,000 francs at your service. I had taken up a few days ago the little wench you saw with me this evening at the Funambules, where I had gone without looking at the play-bill. Madame Bambochio,—may the devil run after her—had said to me: 'let us go to the Funambules;' and go we did. And as I have already observed, my children, this time, as at all other times, I have met with two pieces of good luck. Two did I say? Three, four, five, I ought to say rather, for did I not allow myself the recreation of sweeping the faces of little Viscount Scipio, his father, and tutor, when I sprang on the stage to assist my poor Basquine? Such is my confession. Now, Basquine, tell us how the devil it was we met with you on those boards?'

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH THE MERRY BALTHAZAR BIDS MARTIN ADIEU, AND GIVES HIM SOME FRIENDLY ADMONITIONS AT PARTING.

"'AFTER leaving Bamboche,' resumed the girl, 'I removed from Paris lest I should meet him and be prevailed on to return; I continued to sing in coffee-houses in the different towns I came to. Although

my audiences were so rude as our original public' when we belonged to the troop of La Levrasse, I endeavoured to impart to my voice, my utterance, and countenance, the greatest possible expression: thus every circumstance with me became a subject of study and observation as to the means of captivating, moving, and exciting the spectators. I even attempted to compose the words and the air of several songs which proved very successful among my open air auditory. Engrossed with the single aim towards which all my thoughts were directed, I was hardly sensible to the poverty, the disgust, the abject companionship which my vagrant course necessarily inflicted on me—though this misery ought to have been the more painful, that, during my long abode with the Duke of Castlebarry, I had known all the refinements of opulent life. Chance having brought me to Orleans, I was singing one night in a low coffee-house, my voice was in tune, and my success was triumphant. Among the audience I I remarked a man of about fifty, with a most intelligent face, but whose purple cheeks showed him to be an inveterate drunkard; his countenance struck me the more owing to his whimsical dress. His shabby frock-coat was worn over a kind of blue velvet jacket dreadfully faded, and which still exhibited the shreds of embroidery, and his pantaloons patched in many parts, were strapped over his morocco leather boots, heelworn and formerly red,'

"'Some old actor, I wager?' said Bamboche.

"'Exactly so,' returned Basquine: 'that singular personage, who sported in the streets his theatrical garb, was an old actor of the comic opera; his continual drunkenness had caused him to be dismissed shortly before from the theatre of that city; he was called the *Little Jester*. Endowed with a good share of natural humour, merry, and a most cheerful table companion, people used to contend for his company. He was therefore at all times either tipsy, or thoroughly intoxicated. The Little Jester, after he had listened to my songs with great attention, instead of applauding me, came up to me and said:—I am an old stager—I can distinguish a good voice and real talent. If you labour, my child, in less than four or five years you may become the first vocalist at the opera in Paris. If you like, I will give you some lessons; I have nothing to do—it will divert me.' I accepted the offer with the most lively gratitude.

"'And had the man really any talent?' inquired I.

"'If the poor fellow,' she replied, 'had been able to put in practise the excellent theory he professed, he must have acquired an illustrious name among the greatest actors of the age. The professor who attended me at the duke's was an excellent singer and a remarkable composer, but he was by no means an actor. The Little Jester, on the contrary, was a tolerably good musician, but he was more especially an actor, and an accomplished comedian. None knew so well as he did *in theory* the innumerable resources of the art, from the freest comical effects, to the highest dramatic efforts. How was it that man who, with his wonderful intelligence, so, well drew out and analysed a part, alike in Mobiri, in Racine, or Corneille, with the deepest feeling and observation; how was it that man had continued so many years on the low footing of a middle-rate vocalist? That is one of the many unaccountable contradictions we met with. I accepted his offer He was a most rigid master to me; severe, harsh almost brutal; but during the lucid intervals between his fits of drunkenness, he gave me lessons and instructions which were a series of revelations in my art. Unfortunately those invaluable lessons came to an end. More and more overmastered by his pernicious habit, the Little Jester sunk at last into a state of brutish idiotcy; they did an act of charity, by placing him, I believe, in an almshouse. Several times the unhappy man had advised me to go to Paris, and try to be engaged on any terms, in some small theatre—certain, he said, that when once I should be settled, no matter where, it I only continued to practise, I should one day become known. So I left Orleans for the capital, and made my way there by singing. Thus I arrived at Sceaux; it was there,' said Basquine, her brow darkening, 'it was there that, since the meeting in the forest, I saw Viscount Scipio for the first time; it was a festival. Hoping to earn a trifle by going to sing in the best inn at the village, I inquired for it. I had just finished a song in the presence of a company at table in the garden, when a servant came out to inform me that I was wanted to sing in a *salon* on the first-floor. You will get some white money, said the lad, for they are rich people. I followed my guide—he opened a door, and I found myself in a room with Scipio and two of his companions. The scene in the forest was still so fresh in my recollection, that I knew the Viscount immediately; but he did not remember me; besides he seemed, as well as his comrades, rather heated with wine.'

"'Come, sing, you little beggar,' said he rudely, and scarcely looking at me; 'I will pay you better than those blackguards in the garden. There, take that,' said he, 'throwing at me a five franc piece which fell on the floor. I was so shaken by the recollections of every kind which the sight of that vicious boy had awakened in me, that I did not at first pay any attention to his rude behaviour. Mute, rooted to the spot, I did not pick up the money; my silence provoked him. He rose up from the table, and whispered something to his two companions; one of them ran to the door and bolted it; then began a scene of scandalous brutality, of which I was the victim. I struggled, wept, implored them in vain, not daring to call out for help, for I knew that in case of scandal, the innkeeper would blame me alone, and turn me out of the house with insult. But my prayers, and my terror emboldened the little ruffians; my obstinate resistance exasperated Scipio: already inflamed with wine, he broke out into a fit of passion, overwhelmed with insults, and struck me so cowardly in the face, as to draw blood. By a quick desperate effort I got loose, ran to the window, tore it open and cried for help. My face was bloody, the company in the garden rose into a tumult; one of the boys ran and pushed back the bolt; the innkeeper rushed in, threw the whole blame on me, and drove me out; but several spectators of the scene took my part, and had it not been for the arrival of Scipio's tutor, who, assisted by the host, let the Viscount and his two comrades out by a back door, and helped them into their carriage, the indignant crowd might have done them some serious injury.'

"'The vicious reptile,' cried Bamboche,—'he's still the same spiteful brat he was in the forest of Chantilly—he must be one day punished for his malice. He begins to grow up.'

"'That's my business; I'll wait a little longer,' said Basquine ironically. 'If I mention this new insult of Scipio's, my friends, it is because, when connected with the event of this evening, it begins to look singularly fatal,' continued Basquine warming as she spoke, 'it is because the evil genius of the Viscount doubtless throws him in my way and urges him to load me with outrage calculated to raise the vengeance of a woman to ferocity, here her eye sparkled, her nostrils dilated, and her features were contracted by an expression of resentment not to be appeased. 'It was not enough,' she added, 'to have repulsed me without pity, when a child, to have insulted me and struck me afterwards—but again the evil fortune of the Viscount brings him to night to the theatre! You do n't know yet all the mischief he has done me; I do n't speak of the shame, at once ludicrous and horrible, that I suffered—the hisses, the jeers that pursued me; but I tell you that it was only after incredible efforts, frightful privations

that I had succeeded in obtaining an engagement at that pitiful theatre. No longer singing in the streets, I was obliged to live upon the ten sous a day which they gave me as a figurante, that is to say to be stinted in my bread, and to lie down promiscuously with the degraded inmates of the most horrible dens in Paris,'

"'Oh! for a woman that was frightful,' cried I. 'My God! what you must have suffered.'

"'The hope, the conviction of success, and of one day being avenged kept up my spirits,' said she; 'I exerted all my skill, and, quite unexpected was the chance—it so happened that a country manager was this evening present at the performance; had he been satisfied with my voice and my acting, he promised me an engagement of eight hundred francs; it was not much, and yet for me it was every thing, for, after this first step, I felt certain of making my way, by dint of toil and perseverance. But, you will easily conceive,' continued Basquine in a tone of gloomy despondency: 'after this night's ridiculous and humiliating failure all hope from that quarter is fled. I do n't know whether I shall even dare to present myself again at that unlucky theatre, to be admitted into which cost me so much pains. But no matter, I am but sixteen!' she proceeded to say with unconquerable spirit, 'I will begin a-new —I will look out for other contrivances—I won't forego my vengeance, not I; I must succeed, and I will, too. Oh! Scipio, I bless thee: the new hatred thou hast poured into my heart increases my energy. I bless thee, for though the endeavour may be my death thou and thy accursed race—your——'

"Here suddenly breaking off, and looking at us both, almost confusedly, she said to us:

"'Excuse me, excuse me, my friends, if I have forgotten you to think of my resentment. Hereafter we will speak of the future; but now that we are again collected, after so many years of trials and separation—let us think of nothing else but the happiness of meeting and being able to say to each other what we would not say to any one besides—it soothes, comforts, and encourages us to do so. For me, my confession is concluded, Martin, so is Bamboche's. It's your turn now. You cannot think how impatient we are to hear your story.'

* * * *

"I related as briefly as possible all that had happened since our separation, and I confess, hurried away by the transport of the moment, and unwilling to conceal any thing from those, who, in their expansive confidence, had just disclosed to me the most secret thoughts of their hearts, the saddest revelations of their lives, I neither concealed from them my respectful love for Regina, nor the alarm occasioned to me by the various kinds of persecution which threatened her.

"And besides, independent of the blind and legitimate confidence with which the affection of Basquine and Bamboche inspired me I relied on the knowledge which the latter seemed to have of the prior career of Count Robert, to assist me in my devotion to the young lady's cause.

"Finally, I was urged to the confidence, indiscreet it may have been, both by the sincere and deep emotion which Basquine and Bamboche evinced when they heard me relate my obstinate struggle with misfortune, and by the anguish—nay, the terror, they testified, when, in my recital, they saw me on the point of succumbing.*

"'*Ah! I breathe again!*' exclaimed Basquine.—'*Martin, I trembled for you just now*,' cried Bamboche, when I had related to them the providential meeting with Regina, and my consequent rescue from infamy.

"Singular contrast, and even now to me inexplicable, those two beings had wasted their hopes, and no longer expected any thing from upright, lofty, and generous feelings, on their own parts: yet they understood and appreciated with the most touching sympathy, every act of fortitude and propriety in my conduct, during those heavy trials. And it was the same with my love for Regina.

"'You believe in Regina, as my mother did in the holy mother of God,' said Basquine to me most feelingly; 'it is not love any longer, but religion, that incites you.'

"'Martin,' said Bamboche to me in a serious voice, after I had concluded my confession, 'you are the best creature in the world. You will laugh when I tell you that I am satisfied to be what I am, since I can the better appreciate you in consequence, than if I were as good and equal to yourself.'

"'Bamboche, your friendship makes you blind,' said I to him smiling.

"'No: thunder of God! I seek not to make fine speeches,' he returned; 'and yet, it is none the less true that the lower we stand the better we judge the height of a mountain.'

"'He is right,' resumed Basquine: we are not blinded by friendship; it only prevents us from being unjust or envious. Go, my good Martin,' added she with a smile that pierced me to the heart; 'it is never beauty that can appreciate beauty—but ugliness, when it is inoffensive and devoid of jealoasy.'

"'Besides, you see,' resumed Bamboche, 'the devil can't prevent it. You will continue to be Martin, as Basquine and I shall continue to be Basquine and Bamboche; we are by this time cast in the metal: you in the good mould—I in the bad one; to scratch that metal would only rend our nails: and it's a stupid game; for after all what does it matter? Do you and Basquine like me the less for being a scapegrace, with the prospect of being a hundred times as bad! No, you like me as I am.'

"'Because you have still so many good qualities,' said I.

"He shook his head, and answered:

"'I have only two qualities—that of being devoted to Basquine in life and death, and to you, too, Martin,—and that empties the bag. But what of that? Do Basquine and I like you the less because your heart is seated as high as ours is debased? No: we like you as you are. And the point which makes us equal, is our devoted attachment to one another. As for that, Martin, you need not brag about it: I am as good as you, and so is Basquine. Our confessions have so far been profitable, that they have taught us that we require each other's help; as for the means of affording it, we will find them, and as I do n't stand upon niceties let us first talk of me. At present I have all I want. Then

* There is no use in mincing the matter, Monsieur Sue. Martin *did* succumb on that occasion: the fact of the honest coachman having found him half dead, and restoring him to life and to the means of living, does not destroy the other fact—the faintness of heart with which Martin *lay down to die* in the suburban cellar. The position of our hero, before he resolved to kill himself by starvation, was far less cruel than that of Mark Tapley, in Martin Chuzzlewit, when he was smitten with the fever in the horrid swamp of the back settlement; and yet the honest fellow did not give in even then, when all his vigour of body was exhausted;—the first word he utters when he partially recovers, is the word "Jolly!" I have insisted the longer upon this point, because it is one of *character* between the two natures, and because the whole body of French literature, since the present Romantic school was founded by Victor Hugo, Dumas, Soulié, Eugene Sue, and others, is infected with the unmanly and ungodly idea of *suicide being a justifiable act*; and as these sections of Martin, the *Valet-de-Chambre*, pass weekly through the columns of the "London Journal," which is read by A QUARTER OF A MILLION OF PEOPLE, it would be supremely unjust to them as to me, and the other contributors to that periodical, to let it be supposed that a belief so utterly at variance with English principles is not an opinion which we all deplore. —*Translator's note.*

there's you and Basquine. As for Basquine, she must, in spite of this night's failure at the Funambules, preserve the country engagement she had anticipated, or, still better, she must have a grand engagement here in Paris.'

"'How so?' said the girl.

"'The devil take me if I know,' returned Bamboche; 'but have it you shall, and a first part engagement to boot, that I'll warrant.'

"'Yes, we both warrant it,' I exclaimed. 'Balthazar Roger the poet, one of my masters, and a princely heart, is bewitched by Basquine's talent. An influential editor, a friend of his, shares that admiration. There cannot be a kinder spirit than that of Balthazar; he must have been quite indignant at this night's adventure, my goor Basquine. I will undertake to prevail upon him to recommend you in the most ardent terms to his friend the editor.'

"'And when once set a-going by the newspapers,' cried Bamboche, 'it will be your place, Basquine, to dictate your own terms. Did n't I tell you that we would obtain you a first part engagement? As for you, Martin, or rather, as for Miss Regina, who for the future may count on my most zealous services, since you love and respect her equally, she shall not fall into the clutches of Count Robert de Mareuil—that I promise you. You don't know what that man is; I am a saint compared with him: but make yourself easy, we will demolish him, and when once he is put aside, (he seems to be the most wicked) we will turn our attention to the rest—the Prince of Montbar, and the father of the nasty little Viscount. That will make two more mouthfuls, that's all. We shall succeed, depend upon it; already, thanks to you, we have secured the means of getting an engagement for Basquine.'

"Then, as I appeared to question a little this expeditious and unfailing measure, Bamboche remarked:

"'Say but another word, and I will pledge myself solemnly to bring about your marriage with Miss Regina. But no,' said he directly, holding out his hand with a look of compunction, 'no jesting with that name. Excuse me, Martin—forgive me—I was wrong. You do quite enough by accepting my assistance. But you see, my worthy, to contend with such fellows as Count Robert, one Bamboche is worth two Martins.'

"'Robert de Mareuil, I think you told me, Martin, was this night at the Funambules?' resumed Basquine suddenly, after a thoughtful pause.

"'Yes,' replied I, 'in the stage-box to the left.'

"'That's it,' said she eagerly. 'Although he was sitting in the back part of the box, he had advanced a good deal towards the stage.'

"'Precisely so,' said I to Basquine; 'he appeared to be attracted—fascinated by your acting and singing.'

"'How singular!' resumed Basquine; I had remarked her for a moment; 'for, entirely engrossed by my scene, I only thought of the personage that I was representing.'

"'Robert de Mareuil appeared fascinated!' exclaimed Bamboche, looking at Basquine as if he understood her drift.

"'Yes,' said she, smiling her smile of derision; 'you understand? a friend of the Viscount's; one of the leading spirits among the race I loathe.'

"'Do I *not* understand?' cried Bamboche.

"'I too,' said I to them, 'think I understand you. But take care; Robert de Mareuil is——'

"'Don't you meddle with this, Martin,' said Bamboche interrupting me. 'There is certain *rough work* which you must not interfere with: it would dirty your hands; you are too delicate. Besides, you need not be alarmed: we'll do nothing without consulting you. But away with business to-night; it only robs us of our best time. We have nothing more to confess to each other; let us feast upon the past; let us begin to say: '*don't you recollect?*' and go to supper. For my part, joy always sharpens my teeth. Luckily, I had ordered in a supper for me and the late Mrs. Captain Bamboche. So let us sit down to table, my friends, and good cheer to all. It won't, perhaps, be equal to the cookery of poor Leonidas Shark. Do you recollect those famous mutton hashes he used to give us?'

"'And his hotch-potches, how he excelled in them, in his quality of man-fish,' said Basquine, hurried along like myself by the jovial excitement of Bamboche.

"'And his manner of driving off the inquisitive,' rejoined I, 'when they came to study him too closely in his tub; do you recollect?'

"'I should think I did,' said Bamboche, pushing towards the fire a table sumptuously furnished, and which he brought in from the saloon fully prepared. 'It was during our last performance at La Levrasse's that Leonidas produced his finest stench, as a trick upon the prying spectators. I was within the second enclosure, and smelt the pestiferous fumes, till I thought I should have been suffocated.'

"'And that very day,' said I, 'poor Basquine, do you recollect the danger you ran through that monster Mother Bigbone, in the human pyramid?'

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"And under the charming influence of those words, so magical with early friends united once more after a long separation:—*don't you recollect?* giving ourselves up entirely to the past, we forgot both the present and the future, in that happy—happy supper, which lasted till morning.

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The next morning I returned home to my masters, seriously uneasy to know what they had thought of my absence, for it was necessary at any cost for me to stay in the service of Balthazar, or rather, in that of Count Robert, whose future proceedings I was so much concerned to discover; I therefore held myself ready to excuse myself by a fictitious story tolerably well conceived. I entered their apartment, therefore; the key was in the door; I went in.

"To my great surprise, I found Balthazar settling his trunk. Poor worthy poet! it was soon ready, and the architectural plan of the splendid palace that he was to build, filled it in a great measure.

"Balthazar's countenance was serious, sad; I had never seen him so before; on perceiving me, he said kindly:

"'Oh! there you are, Martin.'

"'Sir,' answered I abashed, 'excuse me, if—yesterday—I failed——'

"'We won't speak of that, Martin. I have no right to scold you—my poor servant of a day—I am going to leave.'

"'You leave, sir?' cried I and unwittingly added:

"'But the Count of Mareuil—your friend?'

"'My friend?' replied the poet, almost bitterly; 'my friend? he will remain here—he will keep the apartment: the hotel and the neighbourhood suit him.'

"'But you—sir?'

"'Why, for my part, my lad, I am going to spend some time in the country.'

"Doubtless, a serious and sudden rupture had taken place between the poet and Count Robert.

"After a pretty long silence, Balthazar said to me, taking a paper out of a pocket-book:

"'I owe you sixty francs for the messages you did for me, my lad, for you are aware that wages accumulating into a capital of millions—is a mere joke—good for a merry moment. You will excuse

me for having kept you waiting so long for your money.'

"'Oh! sir——'

"'I wish I were able to reward more fully, your attention, zeal, and delicacy, for, my poor lad, you never once applied to me for money though I am sure you sadly wanted it. If I have not paid you before, it was simply because I had no cash: the quarter of my little pension was not yet up, but to-morrow it will be. Here is the receipt which you will take to the address therein mentioned; you will collect the money for me, deducting sixty francs which you are to keep, and you will send me the balance in a money-order by the post to Fontainebleau, to be left for me at the office.'

"'Yes, sir. I heartily thank you,' said I to him, taking the paper.

"'But now I think of it,' resumed the poet smiling, 'my handwriting is so difficult, that I don't know whether you can make out the address. Try a bit.'

"I read the receipt with a good deal of trouble, it is true; it ran thus:

"'*I acknowledge to have received from Monsieur Renard, Rue Montmartre, No.* 10, *the sum of three hundred and fifty francs, the quarter just expired of the pension which* MR. JUST *has the generosity to allow me.*

"BALTHAZAR ROGER."

"'Oh my God!' exclaimed I, after I had finished reading it: *Mr. Just* again!'

"'What's the matter? what do you mean?' inquired the poet. And I related to Balthazar what I had learned of that extraordinary man's former liberality.

"'It is wonderful,' answered the poet greatly moved and very thoughtful, 'this Mr. Just must be the arch enemy in person. I too was dying of hunger, when he rooted me up; how did he know I was an orphan? that my poor father, the best of men, ruined by bankruptcy, had left me penniless, and that along with my mania for writing, I inwardly felt that I should one day shine forth and earn myself a reputation by my labour, I cannot guess. But this much is certain, that Mr. Just, who has the most uncouth and savage appearance of any one in the world, appeared one day before me, and after a long interview, in which he seemed to me wonderfully well informed of all about me, he left me a letter for this Mr. Renard, who has since constantly paid me this pension, so serviceable to me, and so little anticipated. I have never since set eyes on Mr. Just, but the agent said to me at every visit:—'You are going on well; proceed in the same way; you are a diligent young man; you are sure to succeed—you are watched, and your conduct is known to us.'—'My only desire,' continued the poet sighing, 'is that I may one day behold Mr. Just, for if I succeed I shall owe every thing to him.'

"'Oh! I hope so for your sake, sir.'

"'And so do I. Now, tell me; I know you to be a good honest lad, so listen to my advice: It is possible that Count Robert de Mareuil, who succeeds me in this apartment, may offer to keep you in his service.'

"'Well! sir.'

"'Well! don't accept the offer—do n't allow yourself to be lured by the prospect of gain, continue what you are, a good and honest messenger, I cannot say more. But, on the other hand,' observed the poet with dignity, 'as I never disavow my speech, you may tell Count Robert that it was I—you understand me?—that it was *I* who advised you not to remain in his service. Come, my poor good Martin, one last errand; take this trunk to the coach-office for Fontainebleau——'

"I was sensibly touched by the kind and regardful manner of the poet, and in spite of the thousand thoughts awakened in me by his sudden breach with Count Robert, remembering the interests of Basquine, I said to Balthazar:

"'Alas! sir, you are going to leave just as I had a great favour to ask of you.'

"'What favour, my lad?'

"'Last night, sir, you were a witness to the great misfortune which befell that poor Basquine.'

"'The wretches! the dolts! the rascals! the jack-asses!' cried the poet. 'She is sublime—what she, on that stage? why, she 's a pearl hidden in an oyster.'

"'Well! sir, as I told you, I knew Basquine when a child. Last night, I contrived to see her again after her accident; one of our early companions and I sat up with her this night; all her prospects are blasted by that public scandal, for, to complete her misfortune, the poor girl expected to obtain a country engagement, which was to have been determined last evening; the provincial manager was present; but, after such an event, you know—and yet, master, if you really chose——'

"'What can I do in the matter?'

"'You are not unacquainted with the gentlemen of the Press, and they say that if the papers commended Basquine——'

"The kind-hearted poet interrupted me:

"'I ought not to concern myself about Basquine, not on account of her talent, for I admire it; nor of her character, which I do not know—but because, without intending it, she has——'

"The poet did not complete his sentence, but tacked about saying:

"'No matter: justice above all things. I will write to Dupare, the editor, the all-powerful Dupare; and it so happens he admires her outrageously—he shall take her in hand; it 's a disclosure for the public, a new star to be revealed to the world. Make yourself easy Martin. I will do better than write, presently: before I set out I will call upon him, and, moreover, I undertake to crown Basquine myself: I will dedicate an Epistle to her, which shall appear in all the newspapers. Whilst Dupare shall beat the big drum, in his *feuilleton*,* the other papers shall join in the chorus, and *fiat lux*, a new star shall have shone forth.'

"'Oh! thank you, sir,' I exclaimed, 'thank you for——'

"''Tis I ought to thank you, my trusty Martin,' answered Balthazar kindly. 'I was about to leave Paris with gall in my heart, and bitterness on my tongue; thanks to you, I shall now go away with mild and pleasant thoughts, and the hope of doing justice to a poor creature full of talent and genius, but unknown and persecuted. Thank you, Martin! Farewell, my lad! rely on me for your friend Basquine, continue to be a good trusty fellow, and above all—yes above all, do not enter the service of M. de Mareuil.'

"Then, taking up his rusty old hat and his umbrella, the poet cast once more a last lingering glance, and almost a sad one around him, and exclaimed:

"'Dear humble little chamber, how many fine golden dreams have I had within thy walls? how many delightful hours of labour and hope have I spent here?'

"Then, shrugging his shoulders, as if he felt ashamed at his weakness, he cried out:

* It is the custom in the French newspapers to have an article of light reading and amusement, of some length too, printed in every number of the journal. This article is frequently a notice of the new play, or the new actor or actress, just appearing as a fresh candidate for public favour. Sometimes it is a portion of a novel. (indeed generally it is so) as the present series of *Feuilletons* containing the novel of "Martin the Foundling," in the "*Constitutionnel*. This amusing department of the paper, without which a true Frenchman could no more enjoy his *journal* than he could his coffee without sugar, is always placed at the foot of the several pages with a wide bar between the political news and itself.—*Translator's note*

"'Come, here am I addressing a poetical adieu to the walls of a furnished apartment! Good bye, Martin, rely upon me for Basquine—I will be the Herschell of that new constellation; and if it be needful for her service, write to me by post, at Fontainebleau, when you remit me the money. Besides, I shall return to Paris, in two or three months, perhaps, and as I go by I will look for you at the *corner*. Good bye, my boy, don't forget my advice, which is of capital importance to you: Don't enter the service of Count Robert of Mareuil.

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"The poet took his departure.

"The following day, in spite of the reiterated recommendations of Balthazar, I did enter the service of Count Robert.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE BEAUTIFUL REGINA, AND THE FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF A CAREER OF CRIME.

"FOUR weeks had elapsed since my meeting with Basquine and Bamboche, and since my entering the service of Count Robert in spite of the counsels of Balthazar. One evening I was present, but invisible, during the following adventure, which transpired in a small house which stood in one of the most secluded streets in the district of the *Invalides*.

It was at night.

At the back part of a chamber on the ground-floor, a shabby apartment it was too; an altar-piece had been hastily set up. Nevertheless the tabernacle, the evangelist, the sacred phials, &c., all was there; four large silver plated candlesticks, furnished with tapers, lighted up the room, shedding forth a dull and gloomy ray.

A little from the altar two chairs were placed side by side; the deepest silence pervaded the chamber, which was then absolutely vacant.

"A distant church clock had slowly struck twelve a quarter of an hour since, when the low rumble of a coach shook the window panes, after which I heard the clatter of several doors abruptly opened and shut, whilst the sound of hurried steps was heard on the floor of a chamber above the ground-floor where I lay hid.

"Then there was silence again; and a woman wrapped up in a mantle, with the hood let down, crossed rapidly through the extemporaneous chapel, and disappeared by a side door; but, a few moments after, the same door was partly opened and shut several times, as if the woman who had just come in wanted to see what was going on, or rather what was about to be enacted.

"After her, there came in a man of lofty stature, who examined the preparations: doubtless he thought there was still too much light, for he extinguished two of the four tapers, and then withdrew, leaving that vast chamber almost buried in the darkness scarcely dispelled by so feeble luminaries.

"That personage had only just retired, when the two folds of the bottom door were opened, and a man, handing in a woman, moved slowly towards the altar.

"That man was Count Robert of Mareuil; that woman was Regina.

"Two other persons followed them at the distance of a few steps.

"The young girl appeared to be calm, collected, and determined; the tresses of her thick black hair enfolded her fine countenance, which looked as pale and transparent as a cameo; her long flowing black dress, her tall slender form, the proud and lofty carriage, lent the greatest majesty to her deportment. Count Robert was likewise pale; and despite his affected assurance, an observer could easily have detected from time to time the convulsive twitches of deep anguish behind that deceitful mask.

"Robert and Regina knelt down on the two chairs placed for that purpose; the two men who attended them knelt likewise, but a little farther back.

"For a moment Regina fixed her eye upon the Count with an affecting look of trust and tenderness; then, suddenly averting her eyes and bending her head, she clasped her hands and appeared fervently to pray. The young girl had at that instant caught sight of a priest in his holy vestments who had passed in, and who moved slowly forward, holding the sacred chalice in his hands.

"The priest drew towards the altar; bestowed a blessing on the auditory, and began to read the marriage service, whilst the two men, the *witnesses* of Robert and Regina, held, according to custom, a piece of cloth stretched above the heads of the two betrothed.

"When the priest came to ask of Robert, of Regina, whether they consented to take each other for husband and wife, the young maiden raised up her forehead, and delivered the solemn affirmative in an audible voice; Robert, who from time to time was casting uneasy glances about, answered in a faltering manner.

"After the exchange of rings, and whilst the priest was exhorting the new couple as to their conjugal obligations, I heard the tramp and the tingling of the bells of several post horses, galloping into the court-yard. At that report, Count Robert started with joy; and from that moment he constrained his eager impatience so little, that he rose from his chair before the ceremony was at an end, took Regina's hand, and said to her in a hurried voice:

"'Let us go, Regina, let us go; our minutes are counted.'

"The young girl looked astonished at the Count, and seemed to remind him, by a significant gesture, of the decorum he was so strangely forgetting. The Count bit his lips; his features grew rigid; and his foot beat against the floor, until the sacred ceremony was concluded.

"Come—quick!' said the Count, directly, to the young maiden.

"And seizing hold of her hand, he was preparing to leave the altar, but Regina, disengaging herself from the Count's hold, and addressing the priest, said to him in a voice replete with mildness and dignity:

"'Father, at present I have the honour to bear the name of the Count of Mareuil; now, that conjoined by your benediction, our union is sacred and indissoluble, I may express to you my deep gratitude for the concurring sanction you have just lent us. This acquiescence is a sufficient proof, my father, that informed of every thing by the Count of Mareuil, you approve of my conduct, and fully appreciate the gravity of those which have compelled me to contract a private marriage, which to-morrow will be revealed to the world.'

"'Regina!' cried Robert, stamping with his foot, 'you don't know the value of the time we are losing.'

"'What is the matter, my friend?' answered she; 'what do you fear? Am I not now your wife before God and man? Is there any longer any human power which can sever the bond that unites us?'

"'No, no!' cried Robert, in a tone of triumph. 'Regina, you are mine—you are my wife for ever!'

"'Psha! do you think so, lad?' suddenly cried one of the two witnesses.

"That man was BAMBOCHE.

"'Indeed, sir Count!' added he, 'you think this young lady is your wife?'

"At this speech of Bamboche's, Count Robert, livid and bewildered with rage and desperation, sprang on my early comrade; but the latter with his colossal strength seized his two hands, and restraining him in spite of his efforts, said to Regina, in a respectful manner:

"'Pardon me, young lady; I was obliged to let things proceed to the term: you shall now know all.'

"Hereupon the priest, who was about to leave the apartment, stopped short, seemingly amazed, as was also the second witness, who proved to be no other than the malefactor himself.

"Regina, looking from one to the other with bewildered eyes, was at a loss to understand the scene, and stood by like a marble statue, unable to move.

"'Secure the doors!' cried Bamboche, in a loud voice.

"Then he listened; and almost immediately the keys of both doors were heard turning in the locks; for leaving my hiding-place for a moment, I ran and locked one of the doors, whilst the woman in the mantle was locking the others.

"'Now, Count,' said Bamboche, letting him go, 'display your graces; but down with your hands, or I shall break your head with this toy.'

"Then Bamboche drew from his pocket a broken flail—a terrible weapon in the hands of such a man.

"Robert, recovering directly his insolent assurance, went up to Regina, and exclaimed:

"'Regina, we have fallen into a frightful snare; but, fear nothing. I will defend you to the last!'

"So saying, he put one of his arms round Regina, as if to protect her.

"'My God! my God! Robert,' muttered the young lady in a stifled voice, clinging to the Count with terror; 'where are we? What does it mean?

"And as she spoke she looked towards Bamboche.

"'I do n't know what that ruffian threatens to do—he is capable of any crime! Perhaps he wants to rob us, or to extort money, because we have been driven to a private marriage,' replied Robert. 'But fear nothing from the bandit—I am with you.'

"'But, Robert,' rejoined the girl with amazed looks, 'you said this man was a friend of yours, and that other witness likewise.'

"And she pointed to the Rump-in-the-Bowl.

"Thunderstruck by the observation, Count Robert stammered out:—

"'Certainly; nor can I understand it. I believed them to be my friends, and men of honour.'

"'We?—men of honour!' shouted Bamboche, with a horse-laugh. Then turning to the malefactor: 'I say, old rascal, do you hear the Count? He dubs us *men of honour!* It seems that on a wedding-day, people are more gracious than usual.'

"Regina!' cried Robert, furiously, 'they say truly—they are scoundrels! Yes, I own it! Urged by the shortness of time, and afraid of losing you, if our marriage got vent, I was compelled to degrade myself by having recourse to these wretches as our witnesses; but —'

"Regina, with an action full of dignity, suddenly disengaged herself from Robert's arms.

"It was dismay no longer, but painful astonishment, that her features expressed; and she said:

"'So, Robert, you told me a falsehood! You have insulted, degraded me! To invite, as witnesses to our union two wretches like these—two scoundrels, as you call them: it was a cruel injury—a sacrilegious affront!'

"Then turning to the priest, who, plunged in the deepest stupor, seemed hardly to believe what he heard and saw, she said to him, with shame and grief:

"'Ah! my father—can you forgive me?'

"'Enough, miss,' cried Bamboche, interrupting Regina; 'enough, I beseech you; this has lasted too long for you.'

"Then turning to the priest, he added, with a threatening gesture:

"'Come, make haste, sir priest—off with your monkish gown, or I shall disrobe you myself.'

"In a moment the pretended priest had laid aside his surplice and stole.

"That false priest was La Levrasse.

'"My God! where am I?' exclaimed Regina, a prey to the utmost alarm, 'where am I? My God, have pity on me!'

And, bewildered, with suppliant hands, she sank on her knees before the altar.

"'What!' exclaimed Robert, in his turn feigning surprise and indignation, 'can this man be a fictitious priest!'

"'Not amiss!' cried Bamboche, 'not amiss this assumed astonishment!'

"Then addressing himself to La Levrasse:

"'Do you hear Robert of Mareuil? He was not aware, poor innocent lamb, that you had lately set up for a priest!'

"The toyman, grinding his teeth with fury, but subdued by the terror that Bamboche inspired him with, merely clenched his fist at him, and exclaimed:

"'Oh, you lubberly rapscallion! oh, you treacherous villain! here's upwards of a hundred thousand francs I shall lose through you.'

"So speaking, he stamped with passionate rage, and turning to Mareuil, he cried:

"'Can you understand it, Mareuil? What good can this robber do for himself by thus upsetting our scheme, when he it was who conducted the whole? when all was going on so smoothly and promised so well?'

"'You do n't know what interest I have in unmasking you,' replied Bamboche; 'it 's a very simple one: you shall know it directly.'

"Bamboche then turned to Regina, still kneeling, and believing herself undoubtedly under the influence of some fearful vision.

"'Excuse me, miss, if I am compelled to prolong for a few moments a scene so painful to you, but you must know all. Do you remember, eight or nine years ago, having met in the forest of Chantilly with three little children, who implored your assistance?'

"'Yes, I do remember it,' said Regina, who appeared to think.

"'You alone,' continued Bamboche, 'showed any pity for those three children, of whom I was one; and yet, exasperated by the unkindness of the persons you were with, those children wanted to carry you off along with them. I have not forgotten, miss, either our cruel behaviour, or the concern you testified for our sakes, and this day I repay you. Fortune has forced me to become a rank scoundrel; I say fortune, because had I turned to honest courses, I should certainly never have had any intercours or friendly relations with the Count of Mareuil who stands there.'

"Robert did not reply; he was doubtless revolving in his mind how to escape from his desperate situation.

"'If Count Robert was merely riddled with debts, contracted to supply the grossest and most brutal passions, it might be overlooked; his love, or at least his gratitude for you, miss, might have operated his reformation; but, far otherwise is the case: not only does he belie himself, but he deceives—he betrays you most shamefully; and, above all——'

"Here as the Count, in the bitterness of his anger, was about once more to rush upon Bamboche, the latter said, in a commanding voice, to the toyman and the malefactor:

"'Keep the gentlemen quiet, or else, since I am in the vein, to-morrow I will go elsewhere, and speak of certain matters you know of.'

"On hearing this La Levrasse, the Rump-in-the-Bowl, and Count Robert, exchanged a fierce and rapid look, which made me spring out of my hiding-place ready to fly to Bamboche's relief. I was armed, and prepared for any thing, but my early comrade resumed with disdainful boldness:

"'No childish tricks! First, by myself I should not be afraid of you!' Saying which, he pulled out a pair of pistols, which he laid upon the altar, but within his reach. 'Besides,' he went on to say, glancing at the place where I was standing, 'I have at hand a good strong fellow, who would not forsake me at a pinch.'

"'It 's that rascally Martin, I am certain,' cried La Levrasse.

On hearing my name Robert started, seemed to collect his thoughts for a moment, and clenched both his fists with fury; whilst Regina, speechless, her eye obstinately bent upon the Count, did not appear to notice the incident connected with my name.

"'Whether it be James, Peter, or Paul, who stands ready to lend a hand,' continued Bamboche, 'does not matter, but I command you both to restrain the Count. I want to say peaceably what still remains to be stated.'

Robert of Mareuil, assuming still more haughtiness of mien, shrugged his shoulders disdainfully, and said to him:

"'Speak!—speak! I shall not interrupt you; and do you, Regina, attend to him, I conjure you in the name of our love.'

"Regina made no answer; her eye was still inflexibly pointed at Robert, who blanched beneath its menacing steadfastness; the young girl's countenance no longer expressed either grief or dismay, but simply a feeling of indignation mingled with contempt, a dull and lowering curiosity alone serving to arrest its terrible explosion.

"'Two words and I have done,' resumed Bamboche. 'The Count was in prison for debt. He said to La Levrasse, to this most worthy usurer here: 'I am about to effect a rich marriage which will enable me to pay you. Set me at liberty in the interim, and if I do n't collar the portion, you can send me back to prison.' 'That will suit me; but in order to stimulate you the more,' returned the other, 'draw me out some fictitious bills of exchange counterfeiting my signature. When once you are married, I shall return you the fictitious bills for the tin: but if you cannot lay hold of the heiress, faith! you shall go to the gallies. Haunted

by that fear, you will be compelled to bring about the marriage,' and so truly he has.'

"'Continue, sir,' said Regina, with immoveable composure.

"'Regina—if you only knew—' exclaimed Robert, 'I——'

"The young maiden interrupted the count with a look of crushing contempt, and said to Bamboche:

"'Continue, sir. The lesson for me is a terrible one. I will endure it to the close.'

"'Do, miss, take courage, and you will be the better for the trial. The matter of the fictitious priest was settled between the count and my two accomplices, owing to the impossibility of meeting with a real one; still, as it was necessary, in order that the count might be master of your fortune, that not only you should think yourself married, miss, but that your marriage was perfectly correct. M. de Mareuil, at your coming of age, would have engaged you to a second union at the State Registrar's. This latter, real and perfectly legal, would have been proposed to you on pretext of regulating and confirming your former one by the priest—a marriage, which in law has no effect. The count, you see, is a perfect adept at the conjugal code.'

"'And I, who fell head-foremost into the pit,' muttered the toyman.

"'You understand, you old ruffian!—excuse me, miss, this is our way of speaking,—that I was bound to take part in the conspiracy, in order to have the means of preventing its success. If I have allowed things to proceed so far, miss, it has been to show you clearly the unworthy character of the count, and likewise to endeavour to prove my gratitude in my own way, by preventing you, miss, from marrying a dishonoured man, who would have been the cause of so much shame to you, and marred the happiness of your future life.'

"'I thank you, sir; your conduct in this instance is that of a man of honour and spirit,' said Regina, with placid mournfulness, and still continuing to fix her remorseless eye, like that of a judge, on Robert de Mareuil, with addressing a single word to him.

"That silence, to which the active expression of Regina's look lent a terrible significancy, was more awful than the most bitter reproaches.

"Robert, annihilated, bewildered, seemed to be fascinated by that regard of ruthless persecution. At length, wishing to attempt a desperate effort, he exclaimed,—

"'Well, be it so! Regina, I have been guilty—criminal—but did you know into what errors a fond insensate love will hurry a man—did you know how much my ardent passion for you ——'

"'Basquine!' cried Bamboche, interrupting him, 'come forth, my girl, and produce that fine glowing letter which the Count sent you the day before yesterday.'

"At Basquine's name Count Robert grew very pale; and so strongly was he shaken, that he was forced to lean against the wall to save himself from falling to the ground.

"'You have no idea, miss,' resumed Bamboche, "of the vivacity of this gentleman's passion for this poor girl; it began the very day this worthy Count met you at the Museum ——. On that evening he saw her perform at the Funambules—and was fascinated, which did not prevent him from attending to his marriage with yourself; on the contrary: for, when once he was to have become rich, he would have performed his magnificent promises made to Basquine. Come, girl.'

"One of the side doors was opened, and Basquine came out, still enveloped in her cloak, the hood of which partly turned up, displayed her face, at that time beaming with satanic joy; her eyes shone with dark lustre, a smile of coldest irony was on her lips, and she held several open letters in her hand.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MARTIN SAVES REGINA, AND COUNT ROBERT TAKES A TERRIBLE VENGEANCE ON HIS VALET.

"At the sight of Basquine, Robert struck dumb with amazement, cried out in absolute frenzy—

"'Why, this place is hell itself!"

"Basquine advanced with a slow, regular step to Miss de Noirlieu, and offered her the Count's letters. Regina, sedate and unruffled, took one of the letters,—perused it with attentive looks, and then returned it to Basquine, saying emphatically—

"'I thank you, miss;—that is sufficient.'

"'It is my gratitude to you, young lady," said Basquine, 'that has induced me to unmask that man.'

"'Your gratitude?'

"'Yes, miss; and likewise the wish to atone for an injury—a great injury towards you.'

"'Towards me?'

"'Many years ago, in the forest of Chantilly——'

"'Was it you?' said Regina eagerly.

"'It was, miss:—I—he (pointing to Bamboche), —and another child. But, unmindful of the generosity of your greeting, we had the hardihood——'

"'You had been so harshly repulsed, that your anger is easy to account for. But I shall always recollect,' continued Regina, averting her eyes with disgust and aversion from Count Robert, 'that this day you have rendered me a great service: you have preserved me from disgrace.'

"Count Robert, driven to despair, and utterly crushed by the attestations of his ignominious conduct, suddenly threw off his disguise, and exclaimed with fearful looks of rage and wickedness, addressing himself to Regina—

"'Well! be it so.—I have deceived you,—yes, I have betrayed you;—yes, I meant to have sacrificed you to that infernal creature.—But if I am dishonoured so shall you be:—the world shall know you eloped with me:—your father will refuse to take you back;—your shame shall be published: people will believe you have been my mistress, and I shall be revenged. Proud and haughty woman! the world will say—*like mother like daughter.*'

"At this affront, which went to the core of Regina's most sacred and holy feeling—her mother's memory,—the young girl, shivering with passionate and indignant wrath, and quick as lightning, sprang forwards and struck him in the face, exclaiming—

"'Coward! liar!'

"'Well done, noble girl!' cried Basquine, transported.

"But for Bamboche, who threw himself in the way of Robert, who, white with fury, was about to rush upon her, Regina would have been in great danger. But, restrained by Bamboche's powerful grasp, the Count, in spite of his efforts, could do no more than vent his impotent fury in threats and imprecations.

"'Oh! you shall be dishonoured, at all events,' muttered he. But Bamboche answered him with cutting irony—

"'Come, my dear Count, have done with all such unmanly reflections: my measures have been too well taken. This young lady, under the protection of a trusty and devoted guide, shall return home directly to her father;—none will have perceived her short absence. And as for you, my worthy lad, if you have time to speak before you make your escape, or are arrested, you will find it impossible to defame her, for nobody will believe you.'

"'Make his escape, eh?' cried La Levrasse,—'not he: I must be revenged on somebody, and he's the man. He shall go to the galleys, and then——'

"Just then, several loud and heavy blows against the shutters suddenly interrupted the vindictive usurer; at the same time several voices exclaimed—

"'Open, in the king's name.'

"At these dreadful words all present became speechless with terror.

"'Zounds!' said Bamboche, 'I never expected this friendly visit from the police.'

"Then, springing towards Regina—

"'Fear nothing, miss; but trust yourself to me.'

"Availing himself of this move, Count Robert, unheeded by Bamboche, snatched up the pistols lying on the altar.

"'Open, in the king's name,' repeated the same voices.

"Bamboche was standing by Regina. Suddenly, he upset the two long tapers; and the room became plunged in utter darkness.

"Knowing the people of the house, I rushed out of my retreat,—opened the door I had locked a quarter of an hour previously, in obedience to Bamboche, and entered the spacious apartment wherein the sham marriage had been solemnised, and in which the toyman, the Rump-in-the-Bowl, and Count Robert, bewildered with alarm, were groping their way out.

"In order to ascertain where Bamboche was, and approach him, I uttered a cry, such as in our early days had often served us as a signal. Then, remarking by a fresh draught of air that I was passing near an open door, I stood still a moment, and soon heard Bamboche's voice in reply. Guided by that response, and winding through a gallery, I reached the garden.

"So dark was the night, that nothing could be seen a yard off.

"'Is it you?' said Bamboche eagerly.

"'Yes.'

"'Where 's the coach?'

"'In the lane: it is waiting near the little back door.'

"'Young lady,' said Bamboche to Regina, 'nothing is lost; follow this guide, who will conduct you safely home. Quick, quick! you have not a moment to spare. I had foreseen every thing, save a police assault. Come, Basquine, let us cut, girl; there 's a light I see yonder.

"Then I heard Bamboche and Basquine run off, whilst Regina, clinging to my arm, said to me in a stifled voice:

"'Oh! save me, sir, save me from disgrace.'

"'Follow me, lady,' said I.

"And I drew her along, with my arm encircling her waist, for I felt she was fainting. She was obliged to run on along with me; the covered path we had taken led us to a back-door, where we found a coach in attendance, the coachman on his box, with his whip in his hand, and the door open. I had chosen the excellent fellow who had rescued me from hunger.

"I had in a manner, to raise up Regina in my arms, and place her inside the coach. That done, I said to the driver:

"'Go like fury—Faubourg du Roule—I will tell you where to stop. I shall get up behind to leave you more at liberty.

"The coachman lashed his team.

"I was preparing to spring up behind, when I felt a violent pull, and by the reflection of the lanterns, as the coach rolled away, I distinguished the disordered and ghastly features of Count Robert of Mareuil, who, seeing the carriage already at some distance from us, thundered out:

"'Stop!—stop!'

"I stopped his cries by clapping my hand over his mouth, lest he might be heard by the police, whose band had just broken into the house.

"Thanks to my strength, far greater than that of my master, I preserved, in spite of his desperate efforts, the advantage I had in the struggle; although in his bitter fury he bit me inhumanly in the hand, I managed to stop his cries until the vehicle had turned a corner, and got out of sight.

"I relied on my quickness of speed to overtake her, thinking that at the worst, Regina would have the presence of mind to stop the coachman, a few doors off the Hotel de Noirtier, and to return into the house through the private door, which, after having favoured her elopement, had through our contrivance been left ajar.

"When I wanted to put an end to my struggle with Count Robert, he seized the opportunity and straining me with all his might, he said:

"'So it was you, most faithful servant? This time you shan't escape me.'

"'Yes it was I,' said I to him, striving to loosen his hold: "you wanted to commit a crime, and I have prevented you.'

"'Thus then, you were betraying me; you were the accomplice of Bamboche and Basquine, and you have effected my ruin, faithful Martin,' he muttered between his clenched teeth.

"After which, displaying at that critical moment an incredible vigour, he contrived to thrust his hand between my neck and my cravat, took hold of the latter, and drew it so tightly as almost to strangle me. My strength forsook me.

"'You understand, most faithful servant,' said the Count with a wild demoniac laugh as he held me thus gasping for breath, 'you understand that a Count of Mareuil is no game for the galleys. I shall kill myself, but you shall die before me.'

"This desperate, ferocious struggle took place in the dark; but as I felt the Count move his right hand in order to get at his pocket, whilst with his left he kept wringing my cravat so violently, I thought of Bamboche's pistols which the Count had snatched off the altar-piece, on the arrival of the police detachment: a moment later I felt the icy barrel of one of those weapons pressed against my temples.

"A last effort of mine caused the murderer to miss his aim, but did not prevent the shot from being fired; a dazzling flame gushed out and scorched my eyes, and I felt as if a hot iron had been thrust right through my neck, whilst an electric shock threw me down backwards.

"Exactly as my head rebounded from the ground, I heard another report, and swooned away.

* * * * * *
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"As for the events which had occurred previous to the sham marriage of Count Robert and Regina, they may readily be guessed. Robert had managed to set up a correspondence with the maiden, and, by dint of fallacious entreaties, a feigned passion, he had succeeded to induce her to take the imprudent course so happily baffled by Bamboche.

"Although still unknown to, and unseen by, Regina, I was the sole emissary between her and my master in this private correspondence, and my zeal for the Count never flagged.

"I subsequently found out the cause of the rupture between Balthazar and Count Robert.

"The latter, during the performance at the Funambles, had been so suddenly smitten and so deeply taken with Basquine, that, far from seeking to dissemble, he said to the poet:

"'I have now another motive for marrying Regina and her fortune, I want to be Basquine's lover. I will make her one of the dashing women in Paris, though it should cost me heaps of gold——'

"At this revelation, Balthazar hitherto blinded by friendship, and inattentive to the scruples provoked by Robert's greedy avarice, was roused by this final mark of selfishness; he broke off for ever all commerce with Robert, after vainly endeavouring to bring him back to better thoughts, by pointing out the atrocious odium of his conduct.

"Nevertheless, Balthazar did not forget the promise to me relative to Basquine. The second day after the poor girl's scandalous ill-treatment at the Funambules, in consequence of one of Viscount

Scipio's practical jokes, there appeared in one of the leading Paris journals, a long article on Basquine, written and openly signed by a celebrated critic, an intimate friend of Balthazar. This article began by relating with indignant warmth, the kind of snare that Basquine had fallen into at the Funambules; then passing on to the talent of the actress, hitherto entirely unknown, he spoke of it with an admiration so glowing, so persuasive, so convincing; he supported his opinion on an examination so delicate, so learned, and so profound, of the action, her singing, and her rare dramatic power, that he at once proclaimed her the greatest lyrical tragic actress of the age, and his notice excited a universal attention and curiosity; so that a crowd of fashionable people hurried to the Funambules.

"The manager, dazzled by this unexpected success hastened with suppliant hands to implore the poor figurante to resume her part of *the Spirit of evil.* As soon as Basquine re-appeared, the enthusiasm was general, boundless, an absolute ovation. For, rare in the annals of the stage, Basquine's talent was really on a level with the brilliant eulogium of the critic: when once public attention was awakened by this new dramatic prodigy, the whole press re-echoed the praises decreed to the young actress. Finally, Balthazar, mindful of his word, published in his friend's newspaper, an *Epistle to Basquine.*

"Singular to say, that dedication, a genuine masterpiece, brilliant with raciness and spirit, replete with the most touching melancholy and the noblest feeling, whilst the poet drew the picture of the trials and sorrows of a young girl of sixteen, poor, unknown, and friendless, having to overcome so many obstacles before she could get her engagement at a petty theatre; this epistle, like a generous action, became for Balthazar himself, the signal of a stunning, tempestuous triumph. His talent, until that time known only to a few friends, was publicly revealed by this epistle, his name was in every one's mouth, and his works hitherto disdained or rather disregarded, began to be sought for and applauded as they deserved to be.

"A few days after the appearance of this epistle, I received from the merry Balthazar, the following lively note:

"'Glory to thee! worthy Martin, the friend of your childhood, is in full career; my name is making the devil's own noise, and *the Booksellers are fighting at my door to get in,* but I never allow them to come into my presence save on all fours, and holding in their teeth a purse of gold sequins.

"'Such is my revenge—it is both noble and dignified. Really, my excellent Martin, all this would never have happened, had you not entreated me to do justice to the incomparable Basquine, and to do her homage myself. Once more then, glory and thanks to thee, most worthy Martin; you finished what my unknown protector, Mr. Just, had begun, and now I am able to restore him his benevolent pension, that some new unfortunate may enjoy its use instead of me.

"'I shall conclude with this motto, which is on the level with your own simple and respectable understanding:

'A good action is constantly rewarded.'

"'Your ex-master and very affectionate,

"'BALTHAZAR.'

"The glittering success of Basquine was a new aliment to Count Robert's insane passion: that passion was too useful to our designs, and Basquine's inexorable hatred *to the race of the Scipios,* as she expressed herself, for our lovely companion to discountenance the frenzied love she had inspired. She deluded the Count with the most fervid hopes, and they both entered upon a passionate correspondence, which, being revealed to M. de Noirlieu, could not fail to become a most destructive instrument against Count Robert.

"That man, however, was cruelly revenged upon me, for not only I was near sinking under the wound that I had received, the ball having passed through the muscles of my neck, but I was in great danger of becoming blind, the shot having exploded so close to my face. For the greater part of a year I totally lost the use of my sight.

"Directly after my struggle with Robert, the police agents, who had vainly come to arrest Bamboche, found me weltering in my blood near the body of Count Robert, who had blown out his brains; I was conveyed to the Hotel-Dieu (a famous hospital in Paris).

"When I recovered my senses, I was lying on a bed in that hospital, and a bandage was strapped over my eyes. On my offering to remove the linen, an old invalid, who was probably taking care of me, said:

"'Do n't attempt to take off your bandage, my lad: you would see none the better for it.'

"'Is it night then? where am I?'

"'You are at the Hotel-Dieu, and it 's broad day.'

"'Then why should I not see better?'

"'Because you are blind.'

"At these dreadful words I tore off the bandage, and opened my eyes in spite of the most torturing pain; but I saw nothing except indistinct darkness.

"After this heavy blow, my first thoughts were for Regina. I was for ever disabled from serving her—from watching over her; for recent events had testified that, however lowly and obscure was my devotion, it might still be serviceable to Regina.

"I wondered too what had become of Basquine and Bamboche: some secret presentiments assured me that he and the malefactor were hunted by the police. Then, I reflected with anxious suspense, that two pretenders to Regina's hand still remained, and that now she was delivered of the Count of Mareuil she might fix her election on the Prince of Montbar, that young man who was outwardly so gifted and alluring, and yet, whose fine exterior did but screen the most abject depravity.

"Yet, unfortunately, my blindness, my cruel sufferings, the absence, or the evasion of Bamboche, all conspired to leave me, in respect to Regina, in a state of long and poignant anxiety.

"A strange event happened, notwithstanding, to clear up my doubts.

"I had been at the Hotel-Dieu about a year: my wound in the neck had healed, but the condition of my eyesight did not improve. I belonged to the division under the care of Dr. Clement, one of our first surgeons. He was a man of European celebrity, and endowed with a powerful original mind. He had taken an interest in me from the first, and as he afterwards told me, it was owing to the intrepid patience with which I endured the most horrible pains, and the simple and dignified reserve with which I had sustained several examinations by a magistrate, relative to the tragic event in which I had been one of the sufferers; my language and my manner of thanking Dr. Clement for his attention to my case, served to confirm him in his opinion of me.

"For some time past the doctor had submitted me to a new kind of treatment, from which he anticipated the greatest results. The day at length arrived on which a certain dressing was to be raised off my eyes. The doctor had invited to witness the operation—probably an interesting one by its novelty—one of his brethren. He related to him the history of my disease, whilst the preparations were being performed by his assistants.

"'How long has he been in this state?' inquired the other doctor.

"'An entire year,' answered he. Then he continued sinking his voice, to his colleague, Now I recollect, the poor fellow came in the day before I called you to a consultation on Miss de Noirlieu; for, I confess, I could not then, nor can I at pre-

sent, account for the extraordinary nervous symptoms which had so suddenly appeared in her.'

"'I think,' resumed the friend, 'we were not mistaken, in ascribing those symptoms to some violent and unexpected shock; and yet, the dear patient obstinately denied having experienced the least cause of excitement, By-the-bye, how is she now?'

"'Not so well as before her marriage,' replied Doctor Clement; 'and therefore I am watching her with the greatest attention. She is so superior a woman. What a heart!—what a soul! how fine—how pure—how high-minded she is!'

"'And yet, it would be impossible to meet with a couple better calculated for each other,' resumed the friend; 'the Prince of Montbar is one of the most amiable of men, and is unrivalled for the distinction of his manners and deportment.'

"'That may be,' returned Doctor Clement abruptly.

"Then, observing that one of his assistants had brought him some articles required for removing the dressing, he added:

"'Ah! this is what I was waiting for; we shall now proceed to lift off the dressing.'

"It would be as useless as it would be impossible, for me to explain the feelings I was a prey to during this operation, which might result in restoring me to sight, at the precise moment I had ascertained the fact of Regina's marriage to the Prince of Montbar,—a marriage I had for so many reasons apprehended.

"My sight was restored.

"After a long course of minute and graduated attentions to prevent the light from affecting me too abruptly, I was at length enabled to look upon the features of my preservers."

CHAPTER XXIV.

IS THERE SUCH ANOTHER MAN IN THIS FALSE AND HEARTLESS WORLD?

"As soon as my cure was completed, I entered as confidential valet into the service of Doctor Clement. He had offered me the place, at the end of a long conversation in which, after relating to him—without concealment—the principal events of my life, (excepting whatever concerned Regina) I declared to him that on leaving the Hotel-Dieu, I should be entirely friendless and without means of support.

"On accepting the doctor's humane offer, I still yielded to the same thought as that which had induced me to take service under Balthazar and Count Robert—the hope of having some distant tie to connect me with Regina. For chance had afforded me an insight into the solicitous regard which the benevolent doctor entertained in that quarter. The marriage did not extinguish my fears, for out of her union with the Prince new disasters might spring.

"Again I thought, so diligent is the fancy of a lover, that my present position might one day have the effect of introducing me to the service of the princess. And then—ah, then! with what attentive vigilance—with what fervent solicitude would I not surround my MISTRESS?

"Doctor Clement was a man of about sixty, of the middle size; his head was very large, and a forest of crispy hair fell over his expansive forehead, which was frequently disturbed by a lion-like contraction of the muscles. The general character of his dark tawny visage was repulsive, harsh, and almost savage; notwithstanding which, his eyes of mild lucid azure, though half covered by his shaggy black eyebrows, frequently wore the mildest, the most tender expression. Rude and forbidding in his manners, the doctor dressed at all times with the coarsest neglect, invariably wore a pair of stout boots over his pantaloons of grey cloth; a long rusty blue riding-coat, a black waistcoat, and a white neckcloth folded like a ribbon round his neck. Thus attired he visited the highest personages in the capital, even the royal family, and all were prudent enough to overlook the eccentric habits of a man of illustrious fame, whose great practical skill, both as a physician and as a surgeon, was the theme of every tongue.

"I shall never forget the first day that I spent with my new master; he took me away from the Hotel-Dieu in a coach which he usually hired to visit his patients. I had offered duly and respectfully to get up by the side of the coachman; he stopped me, saying in his gruff voice—

"'Where are you going?'

"'To place myself beside the coachman, sir.'

"'Is there not room enough inside?'

"'I beg your pardon, sir, but the respect——I——'

"Doctor Clement shrugged his shoulders, sprang into the vehicle, and signed to me to take my seat beside him.

"When the coach had begun to move, the doctor said to me—

"'You have suffered pain—you have been tried—you have struggled with misfortune—you are sincere—there is something of the *real man* in you; I like that. You will shape yourself to my ways and habits; and you shall not regret your fate during the three or four months that we shall spend together; and after that, if you have given me satisfaction——'

"'What, sir!' said I to him, with astonishment, and interrupting him, 'in three or four months you mean to send me away?'

"'In three or four months at the latest, and perhaps long before then,' answered the doctor, 'I shall be dead.'

"'You, sir?' exclaimed I, 'and wherefore at that time?'

"'Why shall you one day die yourself, my lad?'

"Nay, sir, because we are all of us mortal. But how can you foretell?'

"'With a strong incurable disease, experience and tact, a man knows his business at his fingers' ends,' he replied, with a strange look, adding—'this is your charge: to brush my clothes, if you like, I don't much mind that; to keep a correct list of my calls abroad and visitors at home; to draw up the account weekly and present it to me, as I always send my bills in once a week, and if I did not I should be most shamefully robbed. Yes,' he resumed, with bitter disdain, 'the rich people always have money to maintain a set of trulls, to furnish costly mansions, to feast their friends, and yet they never have a penny for the doctor to whom they owe, nevertheless, that health, which allows them to caress their trulls, to keep a stud of horses, to feast with their companions, and to inflate themselves with pride in their palaces. As for me, I sell good health to these profligates as other dealers sell their cloth and wine; and my debtors must pay me; if not—forward Bumbailiff.'

"Then looking at me with his searching eye, the doctor said sharply—

"'Such an appetite for pelf seems contemptible to you—does it not?'

"'Sir——'

"'Be frank now,' he continued in a voice almost threatening. I have engaged you to serve me especially on account of your *truth*. I turned away your predecessor because he had told me a lie—a certain sign of a bad and vulgar nature. I have long been seeking for what I ought to find in you—that is an honest heart, and a dignified mind, although of a low degree. Prove to me that I have not been mistaken, and I will often speak my thoughts aloud and openly before you. So tell me what you think of my cupidity, eh?'

"'Well, sir,' answered I, firmly, 'I had formed quite another idea of the curative art. According to me, it was——'

"'A priesthood—was it not? that's the Parisian term for it,' said he, with a horse laugh.

"He continued—

"'Let it be a priesthood. Well, what then? does not the priest live by the altar?'

"Here the hackney-coach stopped suddenly opposite the gate of a magnificent hotel. Doubtless my master's; for hardly had he appeared when a livery-servant stationed as a scout, exclaimed, running to the coach-door—

"'Ah! doctor, they say that the marquis is in a desperate state, and that there is not a moment to be lost. One carriage has just been despatched for you to the Hotel-Dieu, and another to your house: so fearful we were lest you might have forgotten.'

"Good—good,' said the doctor rudely; 'are my assistants arrived?'

"'Those gentlemen have been here this half-hour.'

"'Wait here for me,' said my master; 'there is a famous load of fishes to be caught in the net here; but it is rather troublesome—the old marquis is a most miserly curmudgeon, though a finished rake.'

"So saying, Doctor Clement went into the mansion.

"During my master's absence, I reflected on the culpable cupidity of which he boasted. His desire to be compensated for his attendance on the rich was legitimate and proper; but his just and reasonable claims might have been sustained with less coarseness; I likewise experienced a very deep affliction as I remembered Doctor Clement's prediction as to his death, according to him, so near, and which he was enabled to foresee, thanks to the inward light which science sometimes bestows.

This disregard of life which he was ready to quit at a given hour, seemed to me extraordinary. Then there recurred to my mind certain singular reports which, in the halls of the Hotel-Dieu, were circulated respecting that celebrated man: it was said that his private life was full of mystery, and it was suspected to be full of singularity. Enormously rich, he possessed millions, for his practice was as boundless as his affected avarice, he lived, said report, in the meanest and closest parsimony; a widower for many years, his only son, who had left the Polytechnic School as artillery officer, was the sole heir to this immense fortune; for during upwards of twenty years he had earned 100,000 francs *per annum*, whilst his expenses did not reach 10,000.

"In fine, the most exaggerated stories, nay, the most absurd, were spread abroad relating to his own house, which was situated in one of the desert streets of the Marais; nobody was ever admitted into it; his patients who called upon him were received by him in a chamber in a house contiguous to his own.

The doctor's open confession left me no room to question his appetite for money, an appetite the more difficult to account for, that he was said to be so rich, and according to himself, so near his end. However, the kind interest he had testified in my behalf, and the paternal tenderness he appeared to feel for Regina, did not appear to me to be reconcileable with the insatiable avidity he assumed. Covetous and avaricious men have no heart; whereas a man that was capable and worthy of doing justice to the merits of the Princess of Montbar, could not, in my opinion, have a selfish and vulgar spirit.

"The doctor's return put a stop to my reflections; he sprang into the coach, his eyes glistening with joy, and exclaiming (I repeat his own words):

"'He is saved; but I made him pay for it, the old b * * *

"Then pulling out of his fob a large bundle of Bank-notes, he said to me as he held them up in triumph—

"'Twenty thousand francs! a capital fee, my boy.'

"'Twenty thousand francs!' I repeated stupified with wonder.

"'Gained in seven minutes. The operation did not exceed that.'

"'Twenty thousand francs,' said I, again; 'it's enormous.'

"'Enormous!' he resumed disdainfully—'enormous! an old niggardly rascal with upwards of two millions of francs a-year, of which he hardly spends one tenth? But for my operation he would have died like a dog. What would he have done with his two millions? But what a farcical scene it was!' added the doctor, rubbing his hands with delight. I went in; the marquis lay on his bed of torture. A horrid case of strangulated hernia—nothing could be more perilous. My assistants stood ready. When he saw me, the old marquis cried out—'Ah, dear doctor! come to my relief; I have no other hope but you. I know it may be mortal; but you are a preserving angel, so you are!'

"'I examined him, and replied, unless the operation is performed—and that very cleverly—in less than a quarter of an-hour you are a dead man.'

"'Admirable doctor,—I shall owe my life to your skill.'

"'Possibly so; but first of all tell me who pays?'

"'I do, doctor; and like a prince, you know, I will; but let us not mention that now, quick—quick!'

"'On the contrary, let us mention it. Besides, I know you: I should be three or four years before I got a penny from you, and I must go to law for it even then. So give me 20,000 francs at once, or else—good bye.'

"At this pitiless speech I could not repress a start of horror. The doctor did not seem to notice it.

"'Jesus, my God!' continued the marquis; 20,000 francs in that way without notice, all at once! Why, this is a plot, a terrible conspiracy; and then time flies. My God! my God! dear doctor, time flies.'

"'I believe you; it does fly. You have lost three minutes out of the fifteen,' said I to him.

"'But since the time is flying,' cried the patient in a piteous voice, 'begin your operation, doctor.'

"'Since the time is flying, tell down the money, marquis.'

"The fear of death prevailed at length over his avarice; he gave the key of his chest to a relative, and watched him with looks of dismay as he saw him deliver to me the 20,000 francs.

"Nor is that all; the marquis, in the very crisis of the operation, cried out,—

"'A thousand francs a-year, alas!'

"After once more contemplating the 20,000 francs with a covetous eye, Doctor Clement, added,—

"'I regret one thing only, and that is, that I did not demand 100,000 francs, as I did in the case of a duke of Castlebarry, a ferocious debauchee; the marquis would have given them. But——I begin to have scruples, and to think with you, that this appetite for pelf is very degenerate.'

"At that moment the coach drew up in some dark dismal street of the Faubourg Saint-Marceau; we ascended to the attics of a poor, tattering house. My master opened the door of one of these lofts, and a startling picture of misery was presented to our view. There we beheld grouped together, the husband, the wife, and three children, pale, hollow-cheeked, and half naked; the wife, a remarkably handsome woman, was suckling a new-

born child: the man, scarcely covered with rags, was painting a parcel of those card-boxes adorned with engravings in which the confectioner puts his comfits and sweetmeats.

"The arrival of Doctor Clement, who was entirely unknown to this wretched family, made them feel both surprise and anxiety; they looked at us in silence, almost in alarm.

"'Your name is Augustus Levasseur?' said my master, fixing a scrutinising glance on the poor artist, and watching him with the keenest penetration, as if to read into his very soul.

"'Yes, sir,' answered the young man with embarrassment; his face lean with hunger, and covered with a stiff unshaven beard, wore a remarkable expression of intelligence, mildness, and candour.

"'You took your degree as a physician at Montpellier?' continued my master.

"'Yes, sir,' replied the young man bashfully, glancing with amazement at his wife, who returned him the same look.

"'Your examination was very brilliant, your conduct always irreproachable,' resumed Doctor Clement, 'you distinguished yourself by great anatomical skill, you are said to be equally skilful as a surgeon and physician; and yet, crushed by competition, unable to get your living at Montpellier, where you married for love the worthy and charming woman I see present, you have come to Paris, in the hope of bettering your condition.'

"'But, sir,' returned the young practitioner, 'who told you about ——?'

"'At Paris,' resumed my master, 'you have been disappointed as at Montpellier; devoid of all protection, you have met with no support, no sympathy among your brethren, who are obliged to contend for their patients with savage fury; for in this city, as in every place, and everywhere, *the big eat the little!* Still, as it was your duty to provide for your family, you have condescended to the most pitiful expedients; you have humbled yourself to flatter the house-porters that they might recommend you to their lodgers, and have even promised the fruiterer in the street a reward, that she might recommend you to the servants she supplied. I know that, and other turpitudes as well, engendered by a merciless competition—a deadly rivalry: and here are you, a man of spirit, a man of great knowledge and understanding, here are you borne down and reduced to such base artifices, because it was necessary to support your children, and your angel of a wife, whose patience and resignation I am aware of.'

"At this last observation, the young man, unable to repress his feelings, held out his hand to his wife, who had gone close up to him; and they both burst into tears.

"My master, himself greatly moved, proceeded,—

"'And in spite of so much humiliation, you could not form a connexion; you were poor, bashful, modest, and moreover poorly lodged; in a furnished hotel you were thought nothing of. In fine, your poverty grew to such a height, that you were forced to sell your clothes for food: then, having no longer any decent clothes to appear in, you took refuge in this attic where you and yours would have died of hunger, if you had not found a last resource in your talent as a painter, and by this means *you earn about sevenpence a-day by working for eighteen hours*, and on that wretched pittance you must all of you subsist.'

"'Sir!' exclaimed the young man, with an expression of painful dignity, 'I have uttered no complaint—nor do I know how you, whom I have not the honour to know, have become acquainted with our situation. I am at a loss to conceive your motive in coming here. Sir, I don't know even your name.'

"'My name?' said Doctor Clement, interrupting his young auditor; 'I am called—I am called—Mr. JUST!'

CHAPTER XXV.

DOCTOR CLEMENT AT HOME.

"THE name of Just reminded me of the mysterious patron, whom I had heard Bamboche, Basquine, and Balthazar make mention of. There could therefore be no doubt at all but that the doctor concealed his benefactions, as far as they related to him, under that name.

"'Now,' he proceeded to say, 'let us talk of business, for I am in haste. You cannot remain in Paris, you possess neither the cunning, the scheming, nor the knowledge of mankind, that are requisite to get on in this city. You would be certain to be crushed here; Paris teems with good, with excellent physicians, whilst three-fourths of the provincial towns are overrun with empirics and jackasses; will you accept this offer:—10,000 francs in cash, an income of 1500 francs, a neat little house in a large borough town in Berry, called Montbar?'

"At this unhoped-for proffer, the young man and his wife stared at each other in dubious amaze, such a prospect doubtless appearing to them too fine to be real.

"'My God, sir, you must excuse me,' said the young man, in a voice deeply affected, 'but this proposal is so extraordinary in our eyes that we dare not trust to it; and yet everything leads us to believe that you are serious in making it.'

"'Wait a moment!' cried my master, 'these are the conditions; in return for the 1500 francs and the neat little habitation, you are to act as the family physician to the Prince and Princess of Montbar (their seat is contiguous to the town) during the time of their sojourn on their estate, situate in the province of Berry. You will likewise have an opportunity of building up a connexion; for within a circuit of twenty miles there is no medical man, excepting a public functionary called a sanatory officer, who is as ignorant as the horse he rides on; and who kills more of the peasantry than the cholera. You will, therefore, carry with you both life and health into a region of twenty miles in circumference, hitherto given up to a set of mountebanks; and as you are kind, humane and enlightened, you will be able to render immense services to that unhappy rural population. One word more. As for these 10,000 francs,—the doctor here laid down the bank notes to that amount on the young man's table,—you will pay the interest of the money in gratuitous visits and advices to the poor, and by distributing to them that medicine which they cannot afford to pay for; here is, moreover, a letter for the agent, who has care of the Castle at Montbar. The house you will have to occupy, is one of the dependencies on the estate: every thing is settled already with the princess, save your consent. So, if you accept the engagement, you shall set out at your own pleasure.'

"'*If I accept*, sir!' exclaimed the young physician, clasping his hands in ecstacy; 'if all this is not a dream, our fondest wishes are fulfilled. It was against our desire that we came to Paris, for——'

"'For you were both attached to the country,' resumed the doctor; 'you and your admirable helpmate are passionate enthusiasts of botany, as was proved by the splendid herbal you had collected at Montpellier, and which you were so sorry to leave behind.'

'But, sir,' said the young man, again glancing at his wife with surprise, 'how come you to know such particulars respecting us?'

"Suddenly I perceived my master grew pale to a frightful degree, though he seemed to struggle most resolutely to resist his pain; his features were strangely altered; he put his hand on his heart, as if a quick acute suffering had seized upon him; and making a violent effort he said in a faltering voice:

"'You accept the offer—it is all settled: a trustful person will call here to-morrow from me to complete the preliminary arrangements.'

"Here the doctor was going away.

"'Sir,' cried the young physician, 'before I accept these extraordinary favours, I must know——'

"'Do n't you see that my feelings are killing me. Let me go,' cried my master in a tone so haughty and commanding, that the young man remained silent and rooted to the spot, whilst Doctor Clement hurried from the attic.

"My master was obliged to lean upon me to descend the staircase and even to stop several times, laying his hand on his heart, as if to repress its throbbings; his breath was short, dry, and painful, and he seemed to be under the oppressive influence of suffocation.

"In this state we returned to the coach, the doctor got in, after giving the coachman the address of the hotel of Montbar.

"'My God, sir,' cried I in alarm, 'what is the matter?'

"He made no answer, but took hold of my arm and pushed me gently away; I thought I understood the import of that gesture, so I waited without speaking for the end of the fit of pain by which my benevolent master was assailed.

"From that time, I felt assured I had been a witness to a fit of that incurable malady, which the doctor had told me was certainly fast carrying him to the grave.

"By degrees, however, his breathing became more regular, his pallor declined, and his pain apparently left him. Then, unable to repress my admiration any longer, as I thought of the generous deed I had just before witnessed, and so many similar actions revealed to me by accident:

"'Ah! noble sir,' cried I, 'now can I understand indeed why you put the screw upon the rich so pitilessly.'

"Doctor Clement, without answering me, signed to me to keep silence; he leaned his aching head against the coach side, closed his eyelids, and remained without winking or moving, as though he felt himself broken by his efforts, and exhausted with excess of feeling.

"Who can tell the feelings that came over me as I sate by the side of a man so rarely gifted and generous! In silence I examined that face so powerfully marked with energetic spirit, that lofty and spacious brow wrinkled by so many years of study and reflection, that mouth so firmly set and harsh: nor can I tell whether it was the admirable generosity of my master that acted upon my judgment,

but as I surveyed his countenance it seemed to me to wear that strong impress of serene austerity which in our fancies we allot to the sages of antiquity.

"My heart still throbbed with violence when our coach stopped at the hotel of Montbar.

"'Sir, shall I accompany you?' I inquired of the doctor.

"No, stay where you are,' he replied.

"The massive gate closed behind him; whilst I awaited his return, I got out of the coach: impelled by an irresistible curiosity, I examined the outside of Regina's abode. It was one of those ancient hotels so numerous in that aristocratic district; the court-yard was evidently very wide, for I could only see the large roofs of the buildings, indented and almost straight, topped with heavy chimneys of sculptured stone so shaped as to represent trophies of battle; to the left you perceived a long garden wall. This wall, forming the angle of a contiguous street, where it rounded off, had a small back door at the extremity by which a person might issue privately into the road. This circumstance reminded me of the whimsical self-abasement of the Prince of Montbar and my two meetings with him in those clandestine vagaries. It is possibly, by yonder egress, thought I, that the prince, disguised in miserable garments, used to quit his opulent abode to go and wallow in the most deplorable excesses. Having thus curiously noted and examined this door, in order to divine whether or not it had recently been opened, I returned into the coach, where my master soon after joined me again.

"'*Now home!*" said he to the driver.

"After which, seemingly depressed by some painful considerations, he said not a word to me until we arrived at his house. During this drive, I once or twice observed him raise his eyes to heaven and shrug his shoulders, like a man who appeals to God in some great act of iniquity that he has witnessed and which he mentally deplores.

"This distressing sadness that my master seemed to experience on leaving the prince's hotel, stimulated my curiosity; had the doctor, thought I, made some grievous discovery, some calamity impending over Regina? The coach stopped at the doctor's own door. The house was situated in the Marais, in a lonely street, so lonely indeed and unfrequented that the grass grew up between the stones. He pulled a bell several times, the door was opened, and we went in, my master and I, to this solitary dwelling.

"'Susan,' said he to an old woman who admitted us, 'this is the good lad I spoke to you about—tell him what he will have to do, and don't enter my study till you hear me ring.'

"'Have you breakfasted, Clement?' said Susan.*

"'I will ring by and by,' answered the doctor disappearing through a passage leading from the antechamber in which we were.

"The old housekeeper beckoned to me to follow her. We went into a spacious chamber, on the ground-floor the windows of which looked into the street.

"'This is your apartment,' said Susan to me. 'This bell is the master's own; that other bell rings from the chamber of Mr. JUST, his son.'

"'Has the doctor a son named Just?' inquired I.

"'Certainly—it was I who brought him up,' resumed Susan, with a certain touch of pride.

"By this I understood that, the doctor, influenced by a most delicate reserve, had invested his manifold intelligent benefactions in the name of his son.

"'When Mr. Just is in Paris,' continued Susan, 'you have to wait on him during his stay, as well as on the master. In general you will help me to clean and settle the house then you will take your stand in master's study close by, announce visitors, and write their names down in the call-book. At six o'clock we take coffee, at noon we breakfast, at seven we dine at master's table.'

"'*Dine with the doctor!*' cried I, '*at his own table.*'

"'Certainly, unless master has any unexpected visitors. It is now eleven: at twelve I shall knock against this wainscot—it will be the meal hour, for with regard to breakfast, master takes it by himself.'

"Then without waiting for my answer, Susan left me.

"Greatly astonished by this strange and patriarchal custom of my new master's who let his domestics eat at his table, I looked round my new abode with an eye of curiosity. Nothing could be duller, or partake more of monkish seclusion than the aspect of that silent house; but after the dreadful misery I had known, when I reflected on the generous character of my venerable master, it was with a feeling of happiness and quiescent delight not to be expressed, that I took possession of my room.

"After some time the old housekeeper returned.

"'Master has just been ringing for his breakfast. Come into the kitchen and take it to him; you shall carry it to his study. Follow me—I will show you the way.'

"This breakfast invariably consisted of a cup of milk and a slice of bread. The doctor never drank wine; his dinner, which was extremely frugal, was limited to a dish of soup and a few vegetables cooked in it. He did not, however, like Doctor Sangrado, expect to restrict his household to the frugal fare, though he had practised the same abstinence for twenty years, as much through inclination as medical prudence.

"Susan gave me the tray, and walked on before me. She stopped at a door, pointed it out to me, saying:

"'That 's the room—go in.'

* In French the sentence is literally: *Hast thou breakfasted*, which is much more characteristic of the familiar and loving commerce, not only tolerated but insisted on by the great practical moralist, in those who lived within his own circle. A volume might be written on this text, *for* and *against* this generous eccentricity in the doctor. I should cry it up, because I think equality among men cannot be too much promoted, and because the old system, alas! the present system it is, has gone on dividing us into classes, so long and so blindly that now each man lives apart in a separate world of his own. Doctor Clement, however, is one of a class, still existing in France, and who have been produced in a great degree, by the theories of liberty as they exist in the writings of Montesquieu, Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau, and others, and the practice of that same liberty among the genuine patriots and the true and honest republicans of the French Revolution. It is *his* love of his fellow creatures that makes the doctor tell his valet to sit beside him in the coach, and encourage his housekeeper to call him by his christian name. The gentleman of 1847, in England, would scorn to do such things publicly, but he does not always disdain to do them privately when it suits his interest. If his Susan is young, he may make her the mother of a family. Which is worse; or rather which is wrong? Whether the system of equality ever can prevail in this world seriously and lastingly, I do not know, for men do not seem to have any genuine taste for those things which are simple, quiet, and orderly; but there is something very touching in the idea of a man so high-minded as Doctor Clement, throwing off all the robes of ceremony and appearing like the brother of his old servant. This expression of admiration as to the doctor and the class of sincere republicans of which he was a type, and the mention of the great spirits whose writings generated the French Revolution, may induce some of the family of small minds to suppose that I admire the historical event called by that name. No such thing. The first advent was very great, but after the death of Mirabeau, the opportunity was lost, for want of a legitimate leader, and a set of tricksters (most of them lawyers) sat a cock-horse on public opinion, and all of necessity went wrong. Only think what it would be in England, if all the power and all the property of the land were to fall into the hands of some fifty or sixty brieflese barristers, and a set of delirious young madcaps who had been living for half a score of years on leg of beef soup and questionable black puddings, were to tread the floors of our royal palaces and dictate their capricious decrees to thirty millions of people.—*Translator's note.*

"The doctor was engaged writing; he signed to me to set the tray down on a small table near his bureau; he did not tell me to go, so I thought it my duty to remain and attend him. Whilst waiting for his orders, I examined the chamber. It was a large square room, very lofty, without windows in the wall, an dlighted by a sky-light. Large glass-cases stood against one side of the study, containing a magnificent anatomical collection. Opposite to the door was a library of plain deal shelves tawny from long use, each shelf loaded with books of every size; the innumerable paper-slips which projected beyond the surface of those faded, well-worn volumes, sufficiently bespoke the long and protracted studies of Doctor Clement. Piles of these books lay promiscuously on the floor; and several huge folios were scattered about. In another part of the room was a collection of geological and mineralogical pieces, and several herbals, most carefully divided and sorted. In one corner I noticed a chemist's furnace with alembics, recipients, and so forth. Finally, in front of the table at which the doctor was sitting buried amidst his books and papers and surgical instruments, two portraits attracted my attention: the first was the bust of a handsome young woman, with her hair plainly dressed, and with a light gauze kerchief over her bosom and shoulders.

"The second picture displayed a very young man of a fine, handsome countenance, with a mild yet haughty look; he was dressed in the uniform of a Polytechnic student, and his features partly resembled those of the young woman in the first portrait.

"The doctor probably had been silently watching me for some minutes, for he said to me with an air of pleasurable pride:

"'Is it not a charming aspect he has, that young man?'

"'Oh! yes, sir,' said I, facing about to my master.

"'It's my son,' he replied; and as he spoke, his severe countenance was overspread with the purest, the divinest ray of paternal love. 'It's my beloved Just, and though he be indeed at present a few years older than he was at the time that portrait was done, and though the sun of Africa has embrowned his complexion, and a glorious scar indent his forehead, you will at once recognise him by that air of mildness, sincerity, and resolution which he has still retained.'

"'Is he still a soldier, sir?'

"'Captain of artillery, if you please, and one of the most distinguished officers of the corps. But that's the smallest of his qualities. It only wanted one vote more to enter the Academy of Science; but at the forthcoming election his return is secure, besides all which he has had the most flattering invitations to go and establish foundries in foreign countries; he was offered 60,000 francs a year, and at a later period a large share in the profits. Such is the use of knowledge! the most valuable of all riches! but don't go and fancy that my son is a mere pedant in A plus B,' continued the doctor warming as he spoke: 'he is amiable, sprightly, and as merry as any of them; he sings like an angel, draws beautifully, and I warrant you that no uniform was ever worn with a better grace or exhibited a more elegant figure: then his courage is like a lion's, his sweetness like a child's, for he possesses that goodness which conscious strength bestows, and then, such a heart!' said the old man tenderly,—'Oh! such a heart!' and then he paused for a moment, and then added: 'I know but one that equals it.'

"'Your own, master?'

"'No; for there are in his some delicate fibres which mine never had—for in delicacy and sensibility he has a woman's heart, my noble Just; and therefore it is I compare it to that of the most perfect woman I am acquainted with.'

"I thought spontaneously of the beauteous Regina, for whom Doctor Clement appeared to feel the most tender affection.

"The old man resumed:

"'However, you will soon see my boy, and you will love him, since you are now one of the family, for I am something of a patriarch in my way of considering a servant,' he added with a gentle smile. 'Susan has told you that you will both of you dine at my table; as for your domestic duties, the difference of age between us will render them almost natural to you. There is nothing to be ashamed of in the services that a young man renders to an old man.'

"'That is true, sir,' replied I deeply touched by so much goodness; 'and, moreover, the good man who took me home and educated me, has taught me by his own example, that there is as he used to say, no situation in life, however lowly, which a man may not dignify by his conduct.'

"'That maxim bespeaks a sound mind, and a noble spirit,' replied my master, affected by those words which Claude Gerard had so often repeated to me. 'All that you have related to me concerning the life, the disposition, and the habits of that man, have given me a high opinion of him. And——'

"Here he broke off abruptly, as if some transient recollection had just occurred to his mind, after which he added:

"But now I remember, the man was a village schoolmaster, as you told me?'

"'Yes, sir; and his name was Claude Gerard.'

"'Did he not reside in some borough or village near Evreux?'

"'No, sir: the parish he belonged to lay in the south.'

"'Then it cannot have been the same,' observed my master.

"'How do you mean, sir?'

"'In the last letter I received from him, my son, who is directing some earth works in the vicinity of Evreux, informs me that, having sojourned a few days at a village in those parts, he met there by accident, a poor parish schoolmaster, whose name he did not mention, but whose mind and character struck him so forcibly, that he expresses himself thus in respect to him: father, this man is one of us.'

"'It's Claude Gerard!' cried I; 'your son's language proves it. Oh! God bless you, sir; it's to you I shall be indebted for having found him again.'

"'But I thought you said the parish he belonged to was in the south.'

"'Yes, sir; but just as I was leaving him, he was about to quit the country, and he did not then know where they intended to dispatch him. All my letters to him were directed to his last residence. But whether he was gone before they arrived, or whether they were intercepted, or lost on the road, I cannot say; but he certainly never received them, or he would assuredly have answered me. But he is the man, I am quite certain of it, sir, that your son alludes to, for Claude Gerard is, indeed, worthy to be one of us.'

"'I begin to think so too, and will write this very day to Just, and ask him whether the schoolmaster he spoke of is named Claude Gerard, and very shortly we shall know the truth. Now, give me my breakfast.'

"When my master had finished his light repast, he gave me a key, and pointing to an old mahogany moveable, with three drawers in it one above another.'

"'Open the top drawer: and give me out an old register you will find there.'

"I obeyed, and delivered to my master a kind of account book, bound in green parchment, and folio size which, by its rusty age and fractured condition, must have seen a great number of years.

"The doctor opened the register, which appeared nearly written through, for he made a short entry on one of the last folios; and then counted the number of empty pages still left, saying to himself.

"'Oh! there are enough left yet.'

"After having for a moment examined the register with a look of melancholy satisfaction:

"'Here, put back this register in its place,' said my master, 'you will next open the drawer beneath, and deposit these notes therein.'

"Saying which he delivered up to me the ten Bank-notes of one thousand francs each remaining out of the 20,000 francs received from the rich and niggardly Marquis.

"As I was obeying his orders, he added:

"'Count a hundred louis, and put fifty of them on each side of my purse; for it really is empty. Here, take it,' said he, as he handed it to me.

"I had with some difficulty pulled out the second drawer, which was heavily laden; in a separate case, I saw a large pile of Bank-notes, upon which I laid those the doctor had given me. Two other boxes of unequal sizes, were filled with gold and silver coin in so large a quantity, that the hundred louis I took out of the box of gold made a difference that was scarcely perceptible.

"After closing the drawer, I returned the key to my master; he then said to me, as he led me to a desk in a small room adjoining his study; and the only issue from which was the door we entered by.

"'You will betake yourself, till my return, to copying the first sheets of this plan on the Organisation of Medical Treatment, to which I have devoted many years; would that I might only live to complete it! for in this unfortunate country, every thing is in a state of languor and confusion, and is wasted and lost, for want of regularity and combination. A pitiless competition accustoms men to be regardless of each other: and therefore in their pursuit of fortune, every means is resorted to—good luck to the strong, down with the weak;' continued he sighing, and then he resumed: 'when you have finished transcribing these pages, your time may be your own till dinner.'

"The doctor then left me alone.

"The confidence he had shown me, an entire stranger to him, by letting me see, the first day of my service, the place in which he kept such considerable treasure, touched me to the heart and affected me more than it surprised me. Certain of my integrity, I was but little astonished to be taken for an honest man; but yet this last action added to the gratitude and veneration I already felt for my master.

"The second day after my instalment witnessed a scene which interested me for two reasons; it was a dignified compliment in showing forth the character of Doctor Clement, that man whose eccentric magnanimity was so stringent in its character.

"I was engaged in writing under my master's dictation, the sequel to the plan of Medical Organisation filled with new and practical views, as lofty as they were benevolent, for he treated upon that great subject as it affected the popular health in towns and villages, when Susan came in to announce M. Dufour d'Evreux, the bearer, said she, of a letter from Monsieur Just, my master's son.

"'A friend of my son's,' cried the doctor, eagerly; 'show him in directly. My house is always open to such a visitor.'

"The next moment an elderly man entered the study; he was neatly attired, and very prim in his person. Although the use of powder had long been out of fashion, he wore it, and likewise a small tail of hair, fastened by a black ribbon dropping over his bottle-blue coat collar: a pair of black satin breeches and silk stockings completed his somewhat superannuated costume.

"As soon as M. Dufour appeared, I had risen, according to custom, and retired to the next room. The doctor, probably through forgetfulness, having left the door partly open, I necessarily overheard the following conversation.

"'You have brought a letter from my son, sir,' said my master.

"'Yes, doctor, here it is.'

"Then followed a short pause, during which my master took cognisance of the letter; afterwards he continued:

"'You desire to have advice, sir?'

"'No doctor.'

"'How?' replied my master in a tone of surprise. 'Listen to what my son says here.'

"DEAR KIND FATHER.

"M. Dufour, one of the richest landowners in France, wishes to take your advice and to be very particularly recommended to you. I hasten to accede to his desire, and have given him this letter to you, and thank you before-hand for your kind attention to M. Dufour, at whose house I was entertained in the most hospitable manner during my superintendence of the works which led me into one of his estates. I embrace you with tender affection."

"'That's what my son has written to me, sir; I am greatly obliged to you for your attentions to him; but if you are not come to ask my advice, tell me to what motive am I indebted for the honour of your visit?'

"'That letter, doctor, was only a pretext to obtain an introduction to you.'

"'A pretext?'

"'Nothing more, doctor. I possess a property of eight millions in landed estates.'

"'Very well, sir, what then?'

"'I am a widower, doctor, and have an only child, a daughter of eighteen years old.'

"'Really, sir, why do you confide these matters to me?'

"'Doctor, my daughter is beautiful—I may say so although her father; and moreover she has been educated with all the care that befits a very rich heiress.'

"'My son loves your daughter, sir, is that it?'

"'I hope so, doctor, for I believe my daughter has found your son very much to her taste during his visit at our house. She has not opened her mind to me on the subject, but you know that a father who adores his child is far-sighted. In fine, sir, to speak plain and to the point, I shall give to my daughter whenever she marries, an estate valued at 5,000,000 and which produces 124,000 francs a year in good farm lands punctually paid. The rest of my fortune should go to their children after my death; you see I go roundly to work. I hope that you likewise will be as explicit, doctor; for public report, and, if I must be candid, the inquiries I have made, ascribe to you a fortune at least equal to mine.'

"After a short interruption, my master replied:

"'One word, sir: I don't believe my son is acquainted with your present step, or he would have mentioned it to me.'

"'Your son, doctor, is ignorant of it, and so likewise is my daughter. Captain Just has been called away about sixty miles from Evreux to other works. We took a most cordial leave of each other, but not one word was said by either of us about marriage. It was after your son's departure that I, seeing how sad and thoughtful my daughter was, recollected certain circumstances, and I supposed, or guessed rather, that there was love under the mask. Now, as this match would present every propriety of station, age, character, and fortune,—fortune especially, for that you know is the first consideration.'

"'*The first consideration?*' repeated my master interrupting M. Dufour, 'do you think so?'

"'Egad! doctor, I should think so, for you will readily believe that if your son, in spite of all his good qualities, his fine and pretty face, had nothing but his sword—I should not come——'

"'Sir,' cried my master again interrupting M. Dufour; 'before we pursue this subject, I must let you know that after my death the whole fortune I intend to leave my son will be three thousand francs a year.'

"'Three thousand francs a year!' exclaimed M. Dufour.

"'But if he marries,' continued the doctor, 'I will settle those three thousand francs a year upon him then—that is all he must expect from me, whether I am alive or dead.'

"'You are joking, doctor; you have cleared, as everybody knows, upwards of 100,000 francs a year during twenty years, and you live, I understand, with the most parsi——honourable economy; so it is quite impossible that——'

"'I do gain, in effect, at least 100,000 francs a year, sir; last year even amounted to upwards of 120,000 francs.'

"'So then I was right, sir, to think you were not in earnest.'

"'Sir,' resumed my master, 'if before you came here, you had consulted my son respecting your present course, founded especially on the *proprieties of fortune*, he would, I make no doubt, have related to you what I said to him when he had reached the age of reason.'

"'And pray what was that, doctor?'

"'This was it:—'My dear boy,' said I to him, 'I am giving you an excellent practical education, which will open the way for you to several respectable callings; by degrees, therefore, you will be enabled to provide abundantly for your necessities; but as society is so constituted, that there exists neither a binding interest, nor true fellowship among men, and that, however industrious—however upright you may be, my poor child, you cannot expect any succour from so unnatural a step-mother as society is, in case of sickness, or unforeseen calamities, befalling you in the course of your labours, and reducing you to poverty and wretchedness, I mean to insure you three thousand francs annual income; thus will you be, happen what may, placed above want. If this provision is not enough for you, if you require superfluities and luxuries, you shall supply them by your own labour, and by your own capacity. Let every man fare according to his works. As for me, my dear boy, I shall have discharged my parental obligations by giving you the education which make a man, the calling which renders him of use, and the money which raises him above want or servility: a father owes his son neither more nor less.'

"'Come now, doctor,' retorted M. Dufour, 'these are some of those moral axioms, most excellent in themselves, which all wealthy fathers quote, and most probably quote to dissuade their children from sloth and indulgence; but beneath it all, the said parents are proud to leave behind them an opulent inheritance to their offspring: thus enabling them to live without doing any work, and to lead the pleasantest life in the world.'

"So, sir,' returned the doctor, with a pungent smile,' there is in the fact of making our children masters of a large fortune unacquired by any toil, something so revolting that the most infatuated fathers are obliged to say to their children out of decency, what I said to my son from a sense of duty and principle:—Toil yourself, and do not rely on my fortune as an inheritance.'

"'But after all, what do you intend to do with the immense fortune you possess?' exclaimed M. Dufour; 'where will you bestow it, if you disinherit your son?'

"'Stop—stop, sir! be patient awhile; every man has his own little whims and fancies,' said my master, jocosely.

"'Then, sir, you confess it,' cried the visitor; 'you have hidden vices you cannot subdue.'

"Doctor Clement but rarely laughed, but on hearing so strange a charge, he broke out into so frank and hearty a peal, as made M. Dufour leap up in his chair.

"'I understand the meaning of your hilarity, sir,' continued M. Dufour: 'the impropriety of the language that escaped me provoked it. Yet one word more. You love your son—you love him tenderly; well, if he were attached to my daughter, if his union with her would secure his happiness, and that this happiness were to cost a few of those millions you talk of depriving him of?'

"'The question resolves itself into two points, sir: either my son is not loved—and then he don't want these millions, or else he is loved by your daughter with equal sincerity and disinterestedness, and then of what use would my millions be?'

"'How? of what use? why without those millions I shall never sanction the marriage, doctor.'

"'Then if your daughter really loves my son, she will marry in spite of you, depend upon it.'

"'Then I will cut her off without a penny, sir.'

"'What matter? my son will have his three thousand francs' income and his appointment; thus he and his wife will live in comfort; if they require superfluities, my son will accept some advantageous offers he has received from abroad.'

"'But all that is precarious, sir; and what if they have children?'

"'My son will have enough to rear them; and at a future day, they must accomplish the duty which God has equally laid upon us all: they *must work* like their father—like their grandfather; I allude to myself, *who came to Paris in my wooden shoes*. And now, sir,' concluded my master rising, 'permit me to leave you; I have several patients to see.'

"After the foregoing conversation, in which was disclosed, in its full and lofty austerity, my magnanimous master's wisdom, and his enlightened affection for his son, I could not help recollecting as a point of comparison by contrast the awful and deplorable fate of my late master, Count Robert de Mareuil, a pitiful victim to the barren idleness and emptiness of the custom of inheritance—and the education, no less vacant, dreary, and fatal, of Viscount Scipio,—an education which threatened him likewise with a future career as fatal in its close as Count Robert's."*

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH THE OLD MALEFACTOR IS CAUGHT IN THE TRAP HE HAD SET TO CATCH ANOTHER, AND COMMITS HIS LAST CRIME.

"SOME local particulars are here necessary to explain an event which happened in the doctor's house four days after my entering his service. His bedchamber, situated on the first storey, and above my own, was separated from his study by a tolerably

* Whatever the prevailing opinions of our time may induce the reader to think of these singular opinions of Doctor Clement, there are many facts in this country which show that they are not only generous but wise. The time that is not devoted to labour by those who have leisure, is so employed as to act detrimentally on the industrious classes, especially now that public amusements and diversions are so few and scanty. At present, in 1847, if a poor man catch a hare upon some gentleman's ground he may be punished for it *as a criminal*; but if that gentleman in the pursuit of his own pleasure, debauch that poor man's wife or daughter, the laws will do nothing to him. Then why should one man, because he is called the Duke of So and so, have half a county to himself, whilst Tom Smith must squat in some corner of a room containing several families besides his own? The

long passage, which likewise ran along the ground-floor, and into which my door opened; a staircase led from the middle of this passage to the first storey, and the landing was exactly opposite the door of the doctor's study; and consequently there was an easy and rapid communication between that room and my own.

"Susan, the old housekeeper, slept near the kitchen, at the other end of the gallery, her windows opening into the garden.

"At night, after taking my master's orders for the next day, I withdrew to my own chamber, resolving to devote a part of the night to study German; the doctor had greeted with the greatest kindness my desire to know that language, assuring me that he was himself desirous I should learn it, as I should then be of great service to him in his correspondence with foreigners. A German teacher had already been to give me two lessons; and thanks to my ardent desire to study, I was already able to prosecute my studies alone with the help of my grammar and dictionary. I set to work.

"The night was stormy, the rain beat against my windows; in that old, lonely district, no sounds were heard above the howlings of the wind, the violence of which shook the shutters within my window.

"As I compared my present lot with the dismal scenes of the past, my heart overflowed with gratitude and tender delight; I felt an unspeakable happiness to think that, had I not been fortified by the serious instructions of Claude Gerard, and my sacred reverence for Regina, I must have succumbed like so many other forlorn destitutes.

"It must have been towards midnight when, overcome by drowsiness, I lay down to sleep, after putting out my candle and closing my shutters; I fell asleep, lulled in a manner by the uproar of the elements: my last thought was one of deep sympathy for those who had no refuge to fly to on that tempestuous night,—as had been my fate before.

"I do n't know since how long I had betaken myself to bed, when I was awoke by a sharp sensation of cold. The pale and flickering light of a lamp, suspended almost opposite the house, threw a faint glimmer into my room, for, to my great surprise, I saw my window open; the rain still pelted down in torrents, the wind blew most furiously; I thought I must have imperfectly fastened my window shutters at night, and that the wind had wrenched them open; I was going to get up and fasten them, when I perceived, to my still greater astonishment, that my door likewise was open. Struck with a vague anxiety, I threw on some of my clothes, and listened: methought I heard some one stealing cautiously along the passage which my door opened into, and which led by the staircase to my master's room. All at once a vivid glare flashed through the doorway; I rushed forth, and on turning the sill knocked against a man in a blouse; the dark lantern he carried in his hand was extinguished; a strong hand caught me by the throat, drove me violently back into my room, and then I felt the sharp point of a knife against my naked breast, and a voice muttered out:

"'Stir not or you are a dead man!'

"'Bamboche!' I exclaimed, on hearing the voice of my early comrade, and catching an indistinct view of his features by the reflection of the street-lamp.

"'Martin!' cried Bamboche, receding a step: 'there was somebody in that bed—it must have been you!'

"'Whence come you? what have you been doing?' replied I in a whisper and with terror.

"'You here! are you well off? I am glad of it, said Bamboche, and his voice quivered.

"'You have been robbing my master!'

"'Well! suppose I have,' he returned boldly; 'what then?'

"'My master!' I exclaimed, conceiving a terrible suspicion and rushing out; 'perhaps you have killed him?'

"'No, he heard nothing,' said Bamboche intercepting me; 'I did not see any one. I swear to you by our friendship.'

"I believed him—there was truth in his accent.

"'You—to steal!' said I indignantly.

"'I have not robbed you.'

"'But my benefactor.'

"'So much the worse—there's enough left behind: I only took out a handful of bank-notes.'

"'But to steal is infamous!'

"'Be quiet.'

"'It's cowardly; and yet you are no coward.'

"'A truce with such preaching.'

"'Bamboche, you shan't leave this house with that money.'

"'Psha! shan't I though?'

"'For the sake of our friendship.'

"'I am hungry, and I have a child crying for bread.'

"'What! you?'

"'Yes—a little girl. When I went to Claude Gerard's to fetch you away, I lodged at an inn in the next borough. Adjoining the garden stood a lunatic asylum——'

"'And there,' cried I affrighted, as I called to mind the half-told story of Claude Gerard, 'you saw a woman young and handsome?'

"'*She made signs to me;* I did not perceive she was mad: I was intoxicated. But how learned you this?'

"'How horrible!—how horrible!'

"'After all, it's done and can't be helped now,' continued Bamboche in a hollow voice; 'a fortnight ago I saw the woman again; she was still deranged: I was enabled to carry off the child—my little girl. I am penniless, and on her account I have stolen.

"'Give such bread to your child! never.

"'I have no choice.'

"'Yes.'

"'How so?'

"'Enlist as a soldier. Go, my master shall take charge of your child: I swear it; and of yourself too, hereafter.'

"'I have got the money—that's more certain. I'll keep it.'

"'In spite of my entreaties?'

"'Yes.'

"'In spite of our friendship?'

"'Yes.'

"'In spite of me, brother?' said I to him in a stifled voice, taking his hand, and bursting into tears.

"Bamboche started, faltered a moment, adding at last:

"'Well—yes, in spite of you.'

"'Stab me then with your knife.'

"'And you,' he replied with a look of defiance, 'call out thieves!'

"Just then I heard, through the open window, at some distance off, and in the same street, the heavy, regular tramp of the night patrol coming towards the house.

"'The patrol,' cried I, 'is coming.'

"'Now you grow strong,' said Bamboche with a savage scowl, as he saw me run to the window.

"I shut it hastily.

"A few seconds later we saw the tips of the soldiers' guns gleam through the darkness; they

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subject will not bear investigation. Eight centuries ago, a French freebooter came over to England with a band of robbers, and after murdering a goodly number of honest Saxons; and violating thousands and thousands of the fair-haired daughters of the Isle, including, says Sir Walter Scott, young women of every rank, he very coolly divided and parcelled out every yard of land in the kingdom to those black myrmidons who followed him, the least criminal among whom deserved to be suspended from the gallows like our Thurtells, Greenacres, and Hockers.—*Translator's note.*

moved slowly by. Soon after, the sound of their footsteps died away amidst the whistle of the storm.

"'Martin,' cried Bamboche, when I rejoined him, 'I doubted your faith; pardon me, thanks for my child's sake.'

"'Wait,' said I to him,—'wait for the patrol to be quite gone, before you escape: the house is hushed in sleep; you may take what you have stolen; there will be no trace left of you: fear nothing.'

"'How strangely you speak, Martin.'

"'As for me, the case is different. My master knows I am acquainted with the place he keeps his money in; I am a new servant in the house: none but me will be suspected. I shall never betray you, as you well know; for I keep my pledges to my friends—I do.'

"'Martin——'

"I shall be taken for the thief: I owed you a debt of gratitude,—I pay it now.'

"'Martin, you despise me.'

"'My master may wake up;—begone!'

"'Listen to me.'

"'Would you ruin us both? Begone,—we are even!'

"'You think me very base!' cried Bamboche, hurling at my feet the bundle of bank-notes he had stolen.

"I was going to fling myself in my friend's arms, when suddenly a dumb, quick tramping was heard over our heads, in my master's chamber, as if he was running after some fugitive; and we heard him cry out aloud--

"'Thieves! thieves!'

"On hearing the cry of thieves, I exclaimed—

"'Bamboche, you are not alone, then?'

"'No,—the Rump-in-the-Bowl remained up stair to fill his pockets.'

"'The Rump-in-the-Bowl?'

"'The robbery had been proposed to him by the last servant that left this house.'

"The cries were repeated just then.

"'It's my master's voice;—he may be in danger. Fly, Bamboche,—fly,' I said to him.

"I then made a rush towards the door, whilst, with a single bound, Bamboche reached the window and threw it open.

"I had hardly got into the passage, before I was brushed against, and nearly overturned by the fugitive malefactor. I instantly seized him round the body; but the fear of an arrest multiplied his strength;—he shook me off and drove me violently back into my bed-room. Chancing to knock against a piece of furniture, I stumbled over it, crying out for help.

"'So! you would raise an alarm,' said the ruffian, rushing on me. I saw the blade of a knife, and nearly at the same instant felt a blow in the shoulder, with a keen, chilling sensation. Nevertheless I held fast my adversary, whilst Bamboche sprang on him like a beast of prey, exclaiming—

"'Take that, old rascal.'

"The bandit sunk so heavily upon me, that I rolled along with him on the floor, and heard Bamboche say to me—

"'Tell them it was you killed him;—do n't forget, my child:—I 'll send you the address. Pick up the bank-notes:—Farewell, brother.'

"Then he leapt out of the window and ran off.

"He had just escaped, and I was disengaging myself, not without difficulty, from the dying strain of the Rump-in-the-Bowl, when my chamber was filled with a stream of light by Doctor Clement, who came in holding a candle in one hand, and a cutlass in the other. A second or two after, Susan, her clothes huddled on, entered behind him, bearing a light.

"'My poor Martin, you are wounded?' cried my master, as I arose all covered with blood.

"'He has fought with the robber, and killed him,' cried Susan with dismay, looking at the body.

"Before I had time to answer, the doctor ran to me,—tore open my shirt where it was bloody,—looked at the wound, and cried out—

"'God be praised! the blade has been driven aside by the bone:—your wound is not serious, my brave, spirited Martin.'

"The old man then hugged me to his heart.

"'How fortunate the wound is so slight,' said Susan, crossing her hands: but immediately after, startled by a sudden quiver in the limbs of the bandit, she fell back, exclaiming—

"'Take care, sir, the robber moves again.'

"'He!' said the doctor, examining the face of the dying ruffian, who was stretched on his back, and who twice opened his jaw convulsively, he cannot live two minutes.'

"And so it proved: a kind of hollow rattle came from the robber's chest with his last breath; a bloody foam reddened his mouth, and he fell back stone dead.

"Stunned, and dizzy with emotion after so terrible a scene, I was obliged to sit down on the edge of my bed.

"'Excuse me, sir,' said I to the doctor; 'but my feelings—the shock——'

"'Sir, do you see this bundle of bank-notes,' said Susan, picking up the large sum which Bamboche had given up; 'and all the gold that villain has let slip from his pocket: we ought to search him:—I dare not myself.'

"'Susan,' said the doctor hastily, 'run and pull the bell which communicates with the porter's lodge next door to us: I forgot to give the alarm when I was first woke up.'

"'True,—we had both forgotten it,' said she, running out.

"'Here, my good lad,' said my master, sustaining me, and putting a glass of water to my lips, drink a little and it will revive you. I will dress your wound presently: do n't be alarmed, it is nothing to signify. Whilst waiting for Susan's return I will, however, wipe the wound.'

"'Oh! sir, you are so kind!'

"'You venture your life to defend my property, and yet you talk of my goodness,' said the doctor as he began to stanch the cut. 'But how did it happen?'

"'Sir,' said I, hesitatingly, 'I had lain down, and after closing my curtains I had fallen soundly asleep, when a sharp sense of cold aroused me: I then only perceived that my window was open.'

"'So you heard nothing?' said the doctor, looking round at the shutters, and examining them: 'but I see now how it is,—the ruffian cut the pane outside, and by means of the implements proper to his craft, he has made an opening in the shutter, through which he put his arm and opened the window. So that being in your first sleep you could not, indeed, have heard the noise.'

"'I heard, nothing, sir; and when I got out of bed, in great anxiety, I heard your cries.'

"'On leaving my study, the robber overturned a piece of furniture in the gallery: I snatched up a cutlass, and ran out, crying thieves.'

"'It was then, sir, on hearing your alarm, that I rushed into the passage, armed with a clasp knife. I wanted to seize the bandit: we struggled together,—he gave me a stab,—I returned the blow, and have killed him.'

"'The ruffian must have known the people of the house: he had probably heard that I had discharged my last servant, and thinking that nobody slept here——'

"My master spoke in a voice so weak and faltering, and his features became so frightfully pale, that I saw he was himself in great pain.

"'My God, sir! what ails you now!'

"'Nothing—nothing,' said the doctor, leaning

however, with one hand on the bedstead, whilst he hastened to apply his other hand to his heart, as if he experienced an acute suffering there.

"'It is nothing, I tell you,' continued he, in a voice still more oppressed: 'but sudden shocks do not agree with my health; and this robbery—this bloody catastrophe, you see——'

"But he added, making a great effort to subdue the pain—

"'I shall still have time enough to dress your wound. Fortunately, here comes Susan.'

"And then, indeed, Susan returned with two men, the porter of the next house and his son.

"'Susan, quickly now, my lint and bandages,' said he; 'I don't feel well, but I shall yet be able to apply a first dressing to the wound of this excellent lad.'

"Then, surmounting his cruel agony with heroic fortitude, and though he was obliged to break off three times to ease himself, my benefactor dressed my wound with a firm hand. But scarcely had he finished before he was taken with so violent a fit of pain that it was necessary to convey him to his chamber.

"When he was put to bed, he said to me in a voice almost extinct, for I had insisted on tending him—

"'Write to my son and tell him to come here on receipt of your letter. Susan will give you his address. I would see him once more—my beloved Just!'

"'How, sir,' cried I, terrified by my master's tone on uttering this last speech, 'do you apprehend——'

"He interrupted me with a mournful smile—

"'I reckoned on a few months more; but these shocks,—and latterly I have had so many,—have shortened the term. So write, good Martin, write directly to my son.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FATHER TAKING LEAVE OF HIS SON, AND RENDERING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STEWARDSHIP.

"I SOON perceived with painful astonishment that Doctor Clement's condition was getting worse: his features altered every moment; but, in the midst of his severe sufferings, his serene aspect did not forsake him; his only care was to know whether his son would arrive in time to receive his parting embrace.

"I believed my master incapable to speak of his approaching end, if he had not been convinced it was at hand; and yet I could not bear to admit the reality of his gloomy anticipations. The old housekeeper, less incredulous than I was, did not conceal his sullen grief. Towards evening, the doctor was seized with a most acute fit, during which he seemed to have lost all sense This crisis was followed by a short interval of repose; he took a potion prescribed by himself, and was lulled to rest.

"Alone, by his bed-side, I sat contemplating his venerable countenance, still so mild, and tranquil, although so dejected. When I looked upon that man, so powerful in intellect and knowledge, so great in generosity, who was thus sinking and about to die, I was infinitely touched. The room he lay in, far more humbly furnished than my own, was a silent witness to the disinterestedness of that man, who, after earning millions, was fated to expire in such sublime, self-denying abstinence.

"About ten o'clock the doctor woke up, turned his head about to me, and said—

"'What's o'clock?'

"'It's going to strike ten, sir.'

"'Have I not asked you the time repeatedly?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'A bad symptom; we grow more anxious about the time, the less we have to spend: 'tis always so with those whose lives are fast ebbing. So! I shall not behold my beloved Just again: he cannot arrive until the day after to-morrow. I shall never live till then. But we have so often conversed together, he and I, of my last hour, to accustom us to the thoughts of this *absence*, that our leave-taking would not have been painful at length! he uttered with a sigh of resignation.*

"'Sir,' said I, 'you deceive yourself: you shall see your son again.'

"Not indulging the same hope, the doctor replied:

"'Let us change the subject. You will readily believe, my worthy lad, that I never should have taken you out of your desperate situation, to let you relapse into it after my death. You are intelligent, honest, and brave; you have had the experience of adversity—the best teacher of all men; I will provide for your future life.'

"'Sir.'

"'Not to encourage you to be idle, for idleness corrupts a man; but you will thus acquire the means of attaining some honourable employment. Considering your age, your love of occupation, you must succeed. Do you feel a wish—a preference for any particular calling?'

"'Sir?' said I, hesitating.

"'Domestic service is not suited to you: at least, as it is now unhappily misunderstood and practised; for, in my opinion, a servant ought to be a member of the family,—and there are great reforms required in that condition. Oh! time—time!' he exclaimed with a look of painful regret. After which, he continued: 'Let us think of you now.'

"'I know, sir, that I shall never meet with another master so good as you; but still——'

"'Would you wish to continue a servant?' inquired the doctor, surveying me with surprise.

"'Yes, sir: but——'

"'But what!'

"'There is but one person in the world I should desire to serve.'

"'Who is it?—my son, perhaps?'

"'No, sir; although I appreciate fully his nobleness of mind.'

"'Who, then, can it be?'

"'Sir, grant me a favour.'

"'Speak.'

"'Trust me so far as not to question me respecting the favour I am about to beg for: my motives are pure and honourable, I swear to you.'

"'I believe you: I will respect them.'

"'Well, sir,—if at any time I am doomed to be separated from you, I would entreat you to use your interest to place me in the household of——'

"'Proceed.'

"'Of the Princess of Montbar.'

"On hearing this request, my master, almost petrified at first, seemed afterwards to experience a satisfaction so unhoped for, that it was my turn to look wonderingly upon him.

"'There are strange coincidences of thought,' said he, in a thoughtful and affectionate tone.

"'How so, sir?'

"'Had I foreseen that, instead of accepting the provision I offered you, you would still consent to serve any one, I should have asked you as a favour—as a sacrifice, to enter the household of the Princess of Montbar.'

"'Can it be true, sir?'

* The coincidence is probably accidental, but this noble sentiment of Doctor Clement will remind more than one reader of the fine answer of Brutus to Cassius in the play of Julius Cæsar, when that fiery Roman wonders at the equanimity with which Brutus bears the news of Portia's death:—

"By oft reflecting that this day would come,
I have the patience to bear it now."

—*Translator's note.*

"'Do you know her?'

"'Sir!'

"'That question escaped me;—it shall be the last. Well, then,—whether you know her personally or not, she is the best, the noblest creature in existence; and as she may one day be in great peril, judge how happy I am to know she will have so faithful a servant as yourself.'

"'The princess is menaced?'

"'But you will watch over her;—for your service will most fortunately require you to be near—always near her.'

"'Oh! yes,—always near her!" cried I. "But who can harbour any ill-will towards the princess?'

"After a short interruption, my master continued:

"'The misfortunes which oppress and menace the Princess of Montbar are of different kinds;—though a most duteous daughter she has forfeited her father's affection,—though a tender and loving wife, she is, I fear, shamefully betrayed by her husband. Sorrow was leading her to the grave, when two months ago she rebelled against grief,—her pride revolted against the injustice of fate: since then, she affects to be composed and gay,—pretends to love pleasure; but I know her,—all this is assumed. She endeavours to drown her bitter cares,—her beauty seems more radiant than ever. But to me Regina seems to wear that supreme beauty over which a dreadful fate is impending.'

"'Heavens! sir!—what mean you?

"'Over those evils you would watch to no purpose. But there is a danger physical and imminent, which by your very condition as a domestic you may possibly guard her against.'

"'Oh! tell it me, sir! tell it me?'

"'There is a man of unyielding character, of iron will, and the rarest energy, a man of immense riches, and capable of any crime, even should it cost him his life, to satiate his passions or his vengeance,—his vengeance above all.'

"'What of that man?'

"'He has been wounded in the most sensitive point in such a man—in his pride:—he had solicited the hand of Miss de Noirlieu.'

"I started;—Count Duriveau's name rose to my lips. The old man continued without remarking my emotion.

"'Twice was he disdainfully refused by Miss de Noirlieu, a refusal the more galling to him, that the haughty and intrepid girl gave a strong reason for it. Hence, the implacable revenge of that villain. Some days ago, I was credibly informed that, when

Miss de Noirlieu was married to the prince, the man I allude to was heard to say, 'She insultingly disdained me: I will be revenged at any cost.' And it is unfortunately but too likely that the hour of his revenge is approaching; for he said very recently, 'My vengeance is marching.' That man is called Count Durieau.'

"'I shall not forget his name, sir.'

"'Take care: to encompass his objects, he will do anything;—the basest means, the darkest, the most devilish deeds;—to bribe the servants, to introduce a creature of his own in the princess's household to lure the unhappy woman into some horrible snare:—there is none of these courses he would reject. In fine, imagine what the blackest, the most pitiless soul—and it must be owned, too, the boldest in wickedness—could contrive, and you will hardly reach the truth.'

"'Why, he must be a monster,' I exclaimed.

"'He is a monster; and it is because that man may be fearfully dangerous to the princess that I shall die happy to know that you are there—near her person,—at her very hearth. Therefore, observe, spy, listen, watch, question, and distrust all who may appear suspicious—nay, even the innocent; for that man's hatred will know how to assume every mask, and every artifice to effect his object. Let your vigilance be constantly awake and on the alert; and some inward presentiment assures me you will, perhaps, rescue that angelic woman from a great peril.'

"'But sir, tell me; have you cautioned the princess against the danger she is exposed to?'

"'Yes; but her haughty courage has induced her to laugh at my terror, and she feels a kind of audacious pleasure in braving that man's hate. Terrified by such disdainful heedlessness, I wanted to warn the prince; but the princess then implored me to conceal it from her husband.'

"'That is strange, is it not, sir?'

"'So strange, that for the sake of the princess herself I wanted to insist; but then her supplications became so urgent, and she invoked such hallowed objections——'

"Here I looked most anxiously at the doctor: he did not explain himself more fully, and proceeded—

"'Her entreaties were so urgent, that I promised on my honour to say nothing to the prince.'

"'Sir,' replied I, 'I can do but little in my condition; but the lady shall not have a more devoted, or more watchful servant than I will be. I have nothing but my life, and that I will hazard for her.'

"'The consequence is, I feel more satisfied and hopeful.'

"'But tell me,' resumed my master, 'does the princess know you already: I must know that much to guide me in my recommendation.'

"'I am an entire stranger to the princess, sir.'

"'And yet you devote yourself so boldly. Nay, fear nothing; I shall not attempt to penetrate into your secrets.'

"After a moment's reflection, the doctor continued—

"'That's it:—I will write to the princess;—I will instruct my son to deliver my letter to her. Regina, I am certain, will respect this last request from an old friend, and take you into her service.'

"'Your son, sir?'

"'Yes: I will thus leave her two devoted protectors, who will exercise their watchfulness over her in two different spheres. I have often spoken to him about her: he has learned from me to love her—to respect her. She, on her side, has often heard me mention my son with deserved affection; and therefore the princess has begged me several times since her marriage to present Just to her. 'Not so, father,' he humorously answered me when I told him of Regina's wish: 'I should fall madly in love with the princess. Wait till my heart is engaged elsewhere, and then I may see her with impunity.' I related this pleasantry to the princess: she laughed at it exceedingly; for at that time she could laugh. But at present that serious interests are at stake, my son will understand the sacred mission I bequeath to him, and which I will fully particularise in my letter, if I have strength enough left.'

"And the old man, whose voice had weakened and sunk considerably, appeared wasted by this interview;—he fell back quite exhausted.

"In spite of all my efforts, my heart was breaking.

"In proportion as I should have been proud and happy to have braved every humility, in order to accomplish my obscure and unnoted task of devotedness, but on condition of doing it singly, did I suffer at the thought of sharing that noble task with my master's son, who, endowed with every outward advantage, with the rarest qualities of mind and heart, would necessarily be admitted into friendly intercourse with Regina, whilst I pursued my painful sacrifice without any looker-on.

"I will confess it, to my shame, for a moment these low and abject thoughts overmastered me, and I had the cowardice to recede from my first resolution: but that detestable weakness well nigh stifled in my heart every generous feeling: I was on the point of confessing to my master that I must renounce my intention, having neither sufficient courage nor sufficient virtue to proceed with it. Fortunately, after many painful struggles, I got the better of my weakness, and said to the doctor—

"'Sir, I have still another request.'

"'Speak.'

"'Have the goodness, I intreat you, not to tell your son under what singular circumstances I am entering the establishment of the Princess of Montbar.'

"'How?'

"'For reasons whose importance none but myself can appreciate, and which are perfectly honourable. Do not tell your son that I am possibly, by my disinterested attachment, above the condition to which I willingly resign myself.'

"'So then, you wish——'

"'That your son should see in me nothing else but an honest servant, for whom you feel interested, and to whom you merely wish to secure a good place at the princess's.'

"'Your secret belongs to you, and I will respect it:—at any rate I should never, without your consent, have told my son a word of what you have entrusted to me. I will, therefore, beg him—that is, I will write to him by-and-by in the very words you wish to be used as for what concerns yourself. And——'

"But Doctor Clement had not time to say more; for the door was suddenly opened, and Captain Just rushed in.

"At this unforeseen appearance, the doctor sat up, and exclaimed: 'My son!' whilst his colourless face bespoke an ineffable expression of acute suffering and intense joy.'

"On entering his father's chamber, the captain's aspect was radiant with smiles; he was entirely ignorant of all that had happened; availing himself of a short interval of a few days in his labours, and had crossed the letter on the road which would have informed him of the doctor's alarming situation.

"By a lamentable chance, Susan, busy in her own room, was not apprised of the captain's arrival; he had been admitted by the son of the porter to the next house. That young lad, since the occurrences of the previous day, had, as a measure of safety, remained at our house. Stunned by the sudden arrival of Captain Just, not daring to inform him of the sad spectacle in store for him, he had simply ob-

served him that the doctor was in bed; and as it was rather late, Captain Just had felt no uneasiness.

"But at the moment he entered, and when the old man, electrified with joy, exclaimed: 'My son!' Susan thus made aware of the captain's return, and fearful lest his presence might produce a dangerous shock to the old man, ran in, pale, breathless, and full of terror, in order to prepare him at least for this meeting. But it was too late.

"The appearance of the old servant, her looks of alarm, the dreadful alteration in the doctor's features, told the captain all; and he threw himself into his father's arms with the deepest anguish.

"After a few moments' silence, during which the father and son continued tightly embraced, whilst Susan and I could hardly restrain our tears, the doctor said in a feeble, but tranquil voice:—

"'Come, cheer up, my beloved Just—let not this hour be a bitter one to us. Why should there be any sadness in the parting adieu of two friends like us? If we are sundered for a short time, shall we not meet again?'

"Whilst uttering this simple speech, the sublime composure of the old man's features bespoke his deep faith in the future immortality of the soul and the meeting of the just.

"Just, though a partaker in that belief, could not emulate his father's stoicism; he stood at the head of the doctor's couch, with both hands over his face, and strove to conceal his tears.

"'My child,' said the dying man, in a tone of gentle reprobation, and taking hold of his son's hand, 'why do you weep? Do n't you know that death implies, not an everlasting separation, but an *absence.*'

"'O father! father, so soon!' exclaimed Just in a voice broken with sobs.

"Here he sunk on his knees near his father's bed.

"'My beloved child—once more, wherefore do you grieve thus? What is there so grievous in the words: *we shall meet again?* Are not our souls pure, tranquil and full of confidence in an upright Judge?'

"After the first effusion of his grief, Captain Just recovered that stoical composure to which his father had accustomed him; he wiped his eyes, and said in a firmer voice:—

"'My good father, you shall be satisfied; the recollection of our parting will never be painful to me: on the contrary, every day I will remember it with delight, for each day will serve to shorten the term of our separation.'

"'And in such laborious and replete lives as ours, time passes so quickly,' said the doctor, smiling; 'it seems to me that my own began but yesterday—but our minutes are counted—I have some serious things to speak of, and some instructions to give you before my departure.'

"Then, making a signal to me:—

"'Martin,' said my master to me, 'take that key on my drawers, and fetch me out of the mahogany secretary in my private room, the register you have seen before.'

"I obeyed, and passed into the doctor's study.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHAT BECOMES OF MARTIN AFTER THE DEATH OF GOOD DOCTOR CLEMENT.

"I WAS absent a few minutes. Doctor Clement had no doubt availed himself of my absence to question his son as to the matrimonial visit of M. Dufour, the rich landowner from Evreux; for when I returned I heard Captain Just say:

"'No, father, never. Miss Dufour is a charming girl, but I never thought of such a thing. Besides, I have always considered, like yourself, that marriage without the prospect of a divorce to liberate or revenge us, was not an equitable bond, but rather a heavy chain, the burden of which falls almost exclusively on the woman.'

"'My child,' said the old man to his son after replying with an approving nod to his remark and taking the register out of his hands, 'you will find in this book (here he gave it to the captain) the exact amount of the money I have earned for the last forty years and odd. The sum amounts to 2,700,000 francs, which if I had invested them in the funds, would by this time have increased to a fortune of five or six millions.'

"'Have you earned so much?' cried the captain with filial pride, 'and with your own exertions alone?'

"'Yes, with my own single exertions, my dear child. You will likewise find in this register the use I have made of these large sums.'

"'What! account to me for your property—to me, your son—at such a time as this?' answered the captain, with an accent of sorrowful surprise and the most exalted disinterestedness, 'what for? Have you not provided me with a profession, and an income above my wants?'

"'It is not my property that I am to account to you for, my boy, but my actions.'

"'Your actions?'

"'Attend: I have always loved you tenderly—I have proved it; but you had thousands of brothers *among men,* poor children forsaken by society, that unnatural mother, and yet who were full of intelligence, spirit, fortitude, and good will. They wanted nothing but the means, the instruments of labour, a little leisure and money, to acquire a reputation in science, in art, or in literature.'

"Just looked at his father with wonder combined with admiration, for he began to comprehend him.

"'Whenever one of these poor outcasts was pointed out to me,' continued the dying philanthropist, 'I used to ascertain scrupulously that he deserved to be assisted, and then I assisted him, not in my own name, my child, but in thine—in the name of Monsieur Just, that my son's name might be blest.'

"The captain could not speak, but tears eloquent with gratitude ran down his cheeks.

"The doctor proceeded:

"'If instead of leaving you, after my death, idle and enormously rich, I leave you only a moderate provision, a secure existence, and a noble career, my dear boy, it has been in obedience to a principle which ought to be inscribed on the social edifice, and which is this: None has a right to the superfluous until each has what his need requires.'

"It is impossible for me to do justice to the simple grandeur of that death-bed scene, or to describe the majesty of the language and the countenance of the venerable man, or the worshipful admiration with which his son still listened when he had ceased to speak.

"As for me, that solemn and striking scene affected me for two reasons: I understood and admired all the more Doctor Clement's high-toned principle, because I compared it with the life of the miserable Count Robert, and with that which awaited Viscount Scipio—those two victims of idleness, the deadly consequence of a rich inheritance.

"'Just, have I done well?' said the father.

"'Oh! glorious, most glorious inheritance!' exclaimed Captain Just with transport; and piously kissing the old register which the doctor had given him. 'O, thank you, father; I feel myself dignified by your virtue.'

"'Come, then, come, my noble and worthy boy!' exclaimed the doctor with unspeakable emotion, and opening his arms to his son, who fell about his neck.

"Thus they remained for a time, tightly locked in each other's embrace.

"Soon after, the doctor, addressing himself to me and to Susan, said kindly to us:

"'Leave us alone, my friends; I wish to speak to my son apart. I shall not omit what concerns you, Martin.'

"We had left my master and his son together about half an hour, when a sudden and sharp sound of the doctor's bell recalled us. Susan and I hurried in, and found our master expiring.

"'My good Susan,' he said in a voice almost extinct, 'I did not wish to depart without returning you my thanks for your kind and heedful care of me. My son will provide for you. Good bye, Susan, we shall meet again.'

"'Yes—and it won't be long first,' said Susan, sobbing; and dropping on her knees, she kissed the dying man's hand.

"'And you too, Martin,' said he, 'I wished to bid you adieu. All is arranged with my son—your independence is secured; and if you retain a good remembrance of me, do for—*you know whom*—what you would for a daughter of mine.... Come your hand too.'

"Then, raising to my lips with filial piety that icy hand, I knelt down on the other side of the bed.

"'Just, my beloved Just,' said Doctor Clement, in a dying voice and whilst his countenance brightened up with a last ray of happiness, 'my affectionate son, thanks to you—I depart quite happy—good bye—my dearly cherished son.

"'*My son*....' was the last word he uttered.

"A few seconds after, Captain Just closed with a pious hand his father's eyelids.

"The death of Doctor Clement caused me the deepest regret. In spite of his urgent recommendation, so consistent with my eager desire to enter Regina's service, I would fix my determination before I had consulted Claude Gerard. I went to see him, at the village he dwelt in, in the neighbourhood of Evreux. I related to him the story of my life since our separation; the increased affection he testified to me after this recital was a compensation for all my sufferings. He appeared to me both proud and happy to see the powerful support I had derived from his instructions, amidst all my painful trials and distress.

"As for my pure passion for Regina, Claude was the better able to sympathise with it, as he himself was passionately fond of a poor but beautiful young girl, who lived in the same village, and was on the eve of marrying her. I saw her several times; she seemed to me to deserve Claude Gerard's love, by her gentleness, her native grace, and her beauty. He spoke likewise with earnest praise of the good qualities of her heart. Never had I seen the honest schoolmaster so completely happy; I was almost dazzled with the radiant happiness he expected from this union, though a very poor one, for all that his betrothed could bring him as a portion, was her beauty, her goodness of heart, and her habits of laborious industry.

"Claude never doubted but my letters had been wickedly intercepted by his enemies in the parish he had left; for as he quitted the place two days after me, he had given his new address to Jean Sabot, on whose fidelity he depended; however my letters never reached him.

"If Claude Gerard had enemies and envious ones, he also reckoned a few friends, thanks to the dignity of his character, among whom was the principal physician in the lunatic asylum, where the poor woman had first been shut up, whom Claude Gerard had tended with so much solicitude, and who, afterwards a victim to the drunken brutality of Bamboche, had given birth to a daughter.

"Thanks to the powerful intervention of this physician, the child and its still insane mother had been transferred to Evreux, a town not far distant from the village where the schoolmaster now performed his functions.

"The first furious madness of that unfortunate had subsided, and had been succeeded by a harmless vacuity of mind. Among other strange fancies, she constantly carried about her, fastened to her waist, one of those small round boxes on which lace-women work, and she kept continually moving her fingers over the box, as if plying the bobbins: seeing her so tranquil, and hoping that the sight of her little girl might produce a salutary change, the doctor concerted this meeting at the house of a countrywoman who had charge of the child. And truly, although the poor mother did not appear to know her daughter, she felt deeply touched at the sight of her, wept over her for some time, and afterwards relapsed into a sort of thoughtful brooding, through which the doctor fancied he could distinguish gleams of returning reason. Satisfied with the results of this first experiment, he resolved to repeat it.

"It was during that second interview of the mad woman and her daughter, an interview which took place in the nurse's little garden, that Bamboche seizing his opportunity when the mother had been left alone with her child for a moment, carried off the little girl, and, strange to say, stole at the same time the lace-box which she constantly carried about her.

"What events had brought Bamboche into that country? How had he ascertained that the child was his? For what reason had he stolen that lace-box? All these questions I could learn nothing to solve, for Claude Gerard's inquiries on that head had been vain; and during the robbery at Doctor Clement's Bamboche gave me no particulars; finally, the day before I set out to visit the schoolmaster, Bamboche had written to me that he was in want of nothing, either for himself or for his daughter, that a fortunate chance had come to his help, and that he was removing further off, and was glad to have proved to me that he too could be faithful *to the pledges of our early days.*

"Claude Gerard and I, greatly distressed to know that the poor child had fallen into Bamboche's hands, resolved to attempt every means, each on his own side, to find out what had become of it.

"Many and long conversations had I with Claude Gerard on the subject of Regina; I concealed nothing from him, neither the part I had taken in overturning the wicked schemes of Robert de Marenil, nor the manner in which I had discovered the strange depravity of the Prince of Montbar, nor Count Duriveau's threat: 'That woman has insultingly rejected me; cost what it may I will be revenged—my vengeance is marching.' Nor did I conceal either from Claude Gerard the fears which Doctor Clement had conceived relative to the future life of the Princess, and the gratitude he evinced, when, under the seal of secresy, I had solicited him as a favour to obtain for me a place in the Princess's household.

"To my great astonishment, Claude informed me of many things concerning Regina that I was unacquainted with, and which still further increased the interest I felt for her. Chancing one day to speak of the sordid cupidity which almost universally dictates the marriages of the rich girls, poor creatures, whose union is thus contracted without love, without desire, without trust on the man they wed, Captain Just cited as the type of beauty, elegance, good sense and fortitude, a young person whom his father had known for many years—Miss Regina de Noirlieu.

"Captain Just informed him that one of the greatest sorrows of Miss de Noirlieu emanated from the disregard manifested to her by her father, who had, however, idolized her during her childhood and her early youth. The unfounded accusation which

still lay upon her mother's memory was the only cause of the baron's aversion, for he had been led to believe, since a few years back, that Regina was not his daughter. Yet the Baroness de Noirlieu had said in her last moments: 'An oath compels me, even at this final hour, to be silent; but, one day, my innocence shall be acknowledged.'

"Regina's hopes as to the restoration of her mother's fame, were founded either on these dying words or on more specific facts, but on which Claude Gerard could not say. Remembering the tenderness her father had formerly shown her, Regina still loved him, and loved him the more tenderly, that she saw him a prey to a fierce, incurable suffering, which was secretly undermining his health. Conscious of her mother's innocence, she set her whole heart on seeing it acknowledged, more especially as her father's heart would be restored to her at the same time. In hopes of softening that inexorable man, who in the sullen capriciousness of grief, had refused to see his daughter since her marriage, each day Regina visited her father, vainly entreating him to see her; and each refusal only tried her hopeful patience; for without once complaining of his obdurate denials, she returned each successive morrow with the same respectful submissiveness.

"As for Count Robert's suicide, and the marriage of Regina to the prince, these facts were likewise explained to Claude by Captain Just, according to public report.

"Miss de Noirlieu having loved Count Robert from childhood, had promised to be none but his; however, the distance between them, his absence, long continued silence, and possibly, too, certain vague reports as to his dissipation and prodigality, had combined to abate in Regina the feelings of that first love.

The Baron de Noirlieu, being impatient to dispose of his daughter, whose presence was become very burdensome to him, proposed several matches to her, among others the Prince of Montbar and Count Duriveau. If in spite of the unaccountable persecution of her father, Regina persisted in refusing M. Duriveau, without encouraging the prince's attentions, she was nevertheless struck with the elegant manners and lively humour of M. de Montbar. About that time, Count Robert returned to claim the fulfilment of Regina's promise. The chivalrous rectitude of the young maiden, the sight of him she had loved since childhood, determined her resolution; she declared to her father that she would marry Count Robert. The baron was immoveable, in spite of all her prayers and entreaties. Then followed, after a time, the suicide of that unfortunate young man, a suicide which was inexplicable to everybody except Regina, myself, and the accomplices in Count Robert's dismal machinations.

"Driven off for a season by the force of circumstances, M. Duriveau and M. de Montbar renewed their pressing assiduities for Regina's hand. Sincere as she always was, she did not strive to conceal her invincible aversion to Count Duriveau, and said to M. de Montbar:—

"Bound by a sacred promise, I was compelled to refuse you; a fatal event has since set me free. I accept the offer of your hand, and you may rely on an upright heart worthy of your esteem.

The prince, who was passionately fond of Regina, found means to overcome the Baron de Noirlieu's resistance, for the baron rather favoured the suit of Duriveau; and to the furious spite of this letter, the marriage took place.

"During the space of six months, the Princess of Montbar appeared to be the happiest of women; but at the end of that time, a great coolness suddenly became visible between the prince and his wife, and Regina sunk into a state of gloomy despondency, which had both pained and alarmed Dr. Clement. The prince likewise appeared for some time sullen, and nervously anxious, for he was said to adore his wife. By-and-by this mournful sadness succeeded, in his case, by a real or pretended indifference.

"The princess's health grew worse and worse. When about two months before Doctor Clement's death, a most extraordinary change was remarked in Madame de Montbar's habit; she had long been living in seclusion. All at once she changed her plan, and went out to parties, balls, and routs: young, sprightly, and beautiful, the Princess of Montbar soon became one of the most fashionable women in Paris; the most distinguished men contended for her slightest notice, but scandal still continued to respect her good name.

"The princess's present condition, being thus explained and understood between us, Claude Gerard approved and encouraged my resolution. I ought, according to him, to pursue to the close my task of devotedness to protect Regina without her knowledge, especially as it was the last dying request of Doctor Clement, whose generous goodness had for ever placed me above want.

"'When once your task is accomplished, as far as may be feasible,' said the worthy schoolmaster, as we parted, 'you shall return to me—we will never more be separated; and since such is your desire, you shall take part in those labours of forming the youthful mind, which every day become dearer to me. If you feel uncertain what to do at any time, write to me.

"Thus fortified by the assent and support of Claude Gerard, I left him with a new and deep reliance on the mission it was my duty to accomplish, and which resolved itself into these heads:

"To baffle Count Duriveau's vengeance.

"To restore her father's love to the princess.

"To assist in removing the stigma from her mother's memory.

"To bring back her husband to his devotion.

"To render, in a word, the princess happy—completely happy?

"Such were the several minor tasks pertaining to the one great object of my life.

"It was an immense task—almost an impossible one, to judge by the scanty means, alas! at my disposal; I, so humble, so obscure, so very abject.

"A task, however, that might be effected and accomplished, to judge by that faith in my love, which, like the faith in the Gospel, remove mountains from their seats.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW MARTIN ENTERS THE SERVICE OF REGINA, AND WHAT HE SEES AND HEARS THERE.

"I RETURNED to Paris.

"The recommendation of Doctor Clement, conveyed by his son to the Princess of Montbar, had been so effectual, that on my return from visiting Claude Gerard, Captain Just informed me that the prince's steward had orders to receive me among the people of the household as soon as I returned to Paris, and to present me to the princess.

"I was perfectly sure that Doctor Clement had scrupulously preserved my secret, for by Captain Just's manner of acquainting me with my reception among the princess's retainers, he did not seem to me to suspect the serious reasons that induced me to take service with her; he, doubtless, saw nothing more in my case, than a domestic delighted to obtain a good place.

"At length I had reached the day so long, so impatiently desired. I was about to see the hope realised hitherto considered as a dream. I was going to live under the same roof as Regina.

"I cannot express how quickly my heart was beating, when I knocked at the door of her hotel. I asked for the head-servant, who, after looking over a note I had handed to him from Captain Just to prove my identity, bid me follow him to the princess.

"After having tapped at the door of a little parlour, he ushered me in, saying to Regina, who sat writing:

"'Here is the valet-de-chambre whom your highness was waiting for.'

"'Good,' answered she, without looking up, and still writing.

"The steward withdrew, and I was left alone with my future mistress.

"The princess was wrapped up in a morning gown which displayed her shape like that of Diana the huntress; her fine black hair fell down in a large bunch behind her neck in a natural curl; and her tiny foot, encased in a morocco slipper edged with silver, projected beyond the long folds of her dress, from the loose sleeve of which, peeped out the opening of an arm as white and polished as ivory.

"A keen perfume filled the chamber, which was hung with green damask curtains on gilded rods; the writing-table was garnished with a hedge of flowers contained within a semi-circular fancy garden, very low, and standing on the carpet; there was, moreover, a large quantity of flowers held in magnificent china vases, and scattered about the room on the various moveables.

"Never in my life had I seen such a profusion of fine flowers. The light came into this parlour through a fancy blind of satin, on which were painted birds of a thousand fantastic hues. This half mystic light, the deep silence pervading the apartment, the delicate odour of the flowers, and the sweet perfume exhaled from the hair and garments of Regina—and finally, the sight of that woman, so beautiful and so long beloved, made me feel a kind of intoxication bordering on vertigo.

"Regina, having finished her letter, said to me, pointing to a vermillion wax-light that stood on the table:

"'Light that candle, I beg you; you will find some slips of paper on the chimney-piece,'

"Agreeably to this command, I went to the hearth, and took out of a china cup a long slip of rose-coloured paper, held it to the fire on the hearth, and lit the candle.

"'Thank you,' said the princess, in her bland, gentle voice.

"Then, whilst waxing her letter and addressing it, she added, without looking at me:

"'Your name is—Martin?'

"'Yes, your highness.'

"'Doctor Clement, one of those I most loved and honoured,' said the princess, in a voice slightly affected, 'recommended you to me so strongly, that I take you into my service in the fullest confidence.'

"'I will endeavour to deserve your highness's goodness,' I replied with a bow.

"Regina, after finishing her letter, went and sat down in a large elbow chair by the fire-side; then leaning on one of the arms, and desirous, I presume to study my countenance, she fixed upon me for a moment a penetrating look; her large liquid eyes having chanced to meet mine, I looked down immediately and my face was covered with a vivid blush.

"I shuddered at the thought that she might remark my awkward confusion; but luckily she did not, for she continued:—

"'I must begin by telling you on what terms you are engaged; you shall have a thousand francs a-year, will that suit you?'

"'Yes, your highness.'

"'You will be dressed at our expense, and dine in the servants' hall; moreover, if, as I expect, I am satisfied with your behaviour, your wages shall be increased next year.'

"'I will do my utmost to give your highness satisfaction.'

"'That will be easy—all I ask of you is to be attentive and punctual in your duty,' said the princess, kindly.

"'My only fear is that I shall not immediately understand the duties of my place, your highness.'

"'My service is very plain and easy; this is what I require of you: you will take charge of this parlour and the two saloons adjoining it; you will see that my shrubs and flowers are always fresh and tastefully arranged; you will settle for these supplies with my flower-merchant; then you will dust with due caution, these china cups and those curiosities that you see on those side tables; every now and then, you will carefully sponge the pictures in this room and the other two; after dinner, when I stay at home, you will station yourself in the waiting-room, and announce the persons who visit me. If I go out, you will execute any orders I may have given you; or else, you may dispose of your time. Besides this, you will wait on us at dinner along with the butler, and M. de Montbar's valet-de-chambre. When I am at home in the evening, you will stay in the waiting-room; when I am out, your evening shall be at your own disposal. That is as nearly as possible what your duty will consist in.'

"'Your highness may rest assured, that I shall not be wanting in my best endeavours.'

"'That I am persuaded of; if you are at all embarrassed, apply to the steward or to Miss Julietta, my chambermaid; they will explain what you may happen not to know. I need not tell you that M. de Montbar wishes that the best understanding may prevail among the servants of the establishment; and I make no doubt of the pliancy of your temper. Tell me, can you read and write?'

"'Yes, your highness.'

"'And keep accounts?'

"'Yes, your highness.'

"'Then you shall undertake to settle, monthly, with a number of tradespeople, a list of whom I will give you, and once a month you will bring me your account back very punctually. I do n't like any arrears in my bills.'

"'I will conform in all respects to your highness's commands.'

"'Well, I hope you will continue a long time in my service, and that I shall be satisfied with your conduct.'

"'Your highness may rest assured that I will do my best to that end.'

"'To-morrow you shall enter upon your duty. To-day, you will learn the uses and habits of the house—only you will carry this letter to its address.'

"Saying which, Regina gave me the letter she had just written.

"'Must I inquire for an answer, your highness.'

"'Yes—you will take up the letter yourself to the antechamber and wait. But in case Mrs. Wilson—that is the name of the lady I have written to—should be from home, you are to leave the letter.'

"After a moment's silence, the princess resumed:

"'Observe, Martin, it is understood that when I go out in the carriage, you are not to follow me: that is the duty of the footmen. However, as it may sometimes happen I shall have occasion for you, I prefer to give you notice at such times. Besides, on those rare occasions, you will not have to wear the livery any more than you will habitually.'

"'I shall always be ready to obey your highness's commands, as in duty bound.'

"'I was forgetting one thing,' resumed Regina: and her face underwent a very painful change,—'once for all—and let me never have to repeat this order—you will go every morning very early to make inquiries respecting the Baron de Noirlieu,—my father.'

"'Yes, your highness.'

"Then, as if to divert her attention from the

painful thoughts which her last orders had awakened, or desirous, it may be, to conceal her emotion from me, Regina pointed to a bouquet of white *daphné* flowers, contained in a small bowl of Venetian glass, encircled with fine stones, and standing on a rosewood table, on which lay also an embroidered handkerchief, an open book, and a piece of unfinished tapestry.

"'I am very fond of the scent of *daphné*,' said she; 'you will arrange with my flower-dealer, so that I may have a sprig of that shrub every morning.'

"Then having paused again for a short interval she continued with some hesitation.

"'Doctor Clement told me in his letter, and his son has repeated it, that you are full of probity. I know too with what spirited fidelity, at the hazard of your own life, you encountered a villain who had made his way into your master's house to rob him.'

"'I did my duty, your highness.'

'"I know it; but those who perform their duty so well, are scarce. In a word the great praise that has been bestowed on those two excellent qualities of yours—fidelity, and honesty—induces me to believe that you add to them the virtue of discretion.'

"Here the princess looked at me again with a piercing glance.

"I had now a dangerous shoal to avoid in this my first interview with Regina: to appear above my situation by my language, or by my sentiments, I might say had I not met with very admirable cases of fidelity among servants. I was therefore obliged to watch myself continually, and of all things to resist the temptation of *making myself interesting* in her eyes. All would have been lost the moment after she had seen any thing else in me better than an honest, active servant.

Thus, the princess, when she asked me whether she could rely on my discretion, meditated in all likelihood to entrust me with some nice delicate commission. The hope of already acquiring a proof of her confidence made me happy; I answered, however, with affected surprise and simplicity:

"'Your highness means that I must render no account of my messages except to herself.'

"'This is what I mean,' said he: 'I am frequently applied to for relief. Now, although there are cases deserving of sympathy, there are others which are either fictitious, or brought on by misconduct. I want therefore to employ you to go occasionally and inquire about the people who solicit my assistance. Do you understand me?' added she, seemingly doubting my quickness of apprehension.

"'Yes, your highness—and I will strive to justify your confidence by the information I shall glean.'

"'Then I will give you this very day a commmission of this nature.'

"Regina then took up a paper, which she read, and asked me if I knew Old Market Street.

"'I shall be able to make it out, your highness.'

"'Well! at No. 11 in that street lives a poor widow, one Mrs. Lallemand; she is bed-ridden with the palsy. Her little girl has been to me twice already to implore my help for her mother. The child excited my interest so much that I gave her some alms. I saw her again the day before yesterday; she entreated me to go and visit her mother, who, she said, had a secret of great importance to impart to me, and not being able to leave her bed was obliged to request me to go and see her. I promised to go, and shall go to-morrow; however, as the child told me that the street was too narrow for a carriage to drive through, you will call at the house in the course of the afternoon, so as to learn on what floor she resides, and save me the trouble of inquiring when I get there to-morrow.'

"'Shall I announce to this woman your highness's visit to-morrow?'

"'Yes, that will cheer her mind one day the sooner. Tell her I shall be with her between nine and ten in the morning.

"'Does your highness wish me to make any inquiries respecting the widow?'

"'No, this time *it is unnecessary*. I fully rely on the little girl's story—so young a child never could be so deceitful. Stop, here's the poor woman's address,' said Regina, giving me a paper. 'Go first to Mrs. Wilson with my letter, and afterwards make your call in Old Market Street.'

"Just as I was closing the door, the princess observed with equal kindness and dignity:

"'It is owing to the excellent character given by Doctor Clement, that I show you this mark of confidence the very first day of your reception. I trust you will justify it by your care and discretion.'

"'I will do all in my power to satisfy your highness.'

"I then left the apartment.

"It would be vain and hopeless for me to endeavour to express the crowd of thoughts that agitated my mind after my first interview with Regina. I felt a kind of swimming giddiness in the brain, as if I had been stunned by some violent blow, and hastened up to my room to collect my thoughts, and recover sufficient self-possession to endure, without being disconcerted, the critical looks of my new companions.

"The breakfast bell rang, and brought me among my new comrades—the steward, the cook, the prince's valet-de-chambre, and the princess's two women. I was greeted most heartily by my fellow-servants; the princess's head chamberwoman, Mademoiselle Julietta, even proposed to treat us to a tea in order to celebrate my instalment. I could easily perceive by the reserve prevailing at our first meal, that they did not feel themselves as yet on a familiar footing with me. I thought, therefore, it would be a prudent step, and serve to better our acquaintance, if I offered my messmates to do any of their errands on my way to execute the princess's commands. Julietta accepted the offer; and begged me, since I had a letter to deliver at Mrs. Wilson's, to invite Mademoiselle Isabeau to come that evening and take tea with us, if she happened to be disengaged.

"I went first to Mrs. Wilson's. She occupied a very elegant house in the Rue de Londres, where likewise her husband, Mr. Wilson, a rich American banker, had offices. The domestic, who met me in the ante-chamber, informed me that Mrs. Wilson was gone out. I gave him my mistress's letter, and requested him to conduct me to Mademoiselle Isabeau, the chambermaid. I found the young girl busy with her needle. She was far from being handsome, but she had a slender, graceful shape, a splendid head of hair, and a certain superiority of manners, not unfrequent among the servants of the great.

"Having learned that Mrs. Wilson was the intimate friend of the princess, there appeared to me no lack of interest in having a little chit-chat with the gentle Isabeau, who, on her part, entered into it with all possible good will, for she seemed to be a very talkative person.

"'I am commissioned, miss,' said I to her, 'to request your company to tea this evening at Julietta's.'

"'Most willingly, sir,' replied the gentle Isabeau, with a look of surprise. 'Pray be seated. But I have not the advantage of knowing you, I think.'

"'I have only just entered the service of the Princess of Montbar as valet-de-chambre, and I brought a letter from my mistress to Mrs. Wilson.'

"'Oh, very good, sir; that alters the case. My mistress is gone out, and will not return till four or five o'clock. Pray make my best thanks to Miss Julietta. As madam goes to the theatre, and then to the ball, this evening, and as I believe, in the princess's company, I hope I shall be at liberty. It was very kind of Julietta to have thought of me—so recent an acquaintance.'

"'So, you have not long known Julietta, then?'

"'No: our friendship goes no farther back than that of our mistresses. Mrs. Wilson has sent me several times to the princess's, and thus it was I became acquainted with Julietta.'

"'I thought Mrs. Wilson the intimate friend of my mistress.'

"'So she is; but people may be intimate without however, being long acquainted. And, between you and me, I don't say so to boast of my mistress, but had it not been for the princess—'

"'The princess!'

"'At the rate she was going at, would possibly by this time be in her grave.'

"'Indeed!' exclaimed I: but so new to the house, and not remarking any signs of dejection.

"'At present she had certainly left off grieving, but you should have seen her two months ago—it would have broken your heart; fortunately she became acquainted with Madam, and then she changed altogether.'

"'It seems that your mistress can perform miracles.'

"'I believe you—she is so lively, so fond of pleasure, as well for others as herself, she is so witty, so cheerful, that nobody can be dull or melancholy where she is. And so she very soon tore to pieces the princess's sullen sadness. They are now constantly out together at festivals and parties.'

"Here our conversation was broken in upon by the entrance of an English governess, leading by the hand the most lovely little girl I had ever seen, an angel of beauty and gracefulness.

"'If madam should come home before I return, Miss Isabeau,' said the governess, 'you will tell her that I have taken Miss Raphaela out for a walk, as the weather is so fine.'

"'Very well, Mrs. Brown,' said the chamber-maid.

"'Good bye, my dear Isabeau,' said Raphaela, kissing the abigail very fondly; 'I will bring you home a cake.'

"And so speaking, the merry little darling skipped out of the room.

"'What a charming child!' said I.

"'Is n't she pretty, little Raphaela? and so good, too, so meek and gentle, the best of hearts. If she don't make her husband happy by and by, it won't be her fault. Poor thing, she is so very good, she will never be able to resist. She's not like her mother—my God! what a spirit!'

"Here we were interrupted again, Isabeau being called away to the linen-room.

"'Farewell till evening, sir,' said she. 'What's your name, if you please?'

"'Martin.'

"'Mr. Martin, tell Julietta I have some nice tittle-tattle, quite fresh and warm, to treat her to; not about our masters, of course, Mr. Martin, but other people's.'

"'I see,' returned I, laughing, 'it's a bit of exchange; so that after all, the dead is no loser.'

"On leaving Mrs. Wilson's, I hurried to Old Market Street, near the Rue d'Enfer, to call upon the poor bed-ridden widow, whom the Princess of Montbar was to visit next morning.

CHAPTER XXX.

MARTIN BEGINS TO SUSPECT THAT THERE IS A SNAKE IN THE GRASS.

I REACHED Old Market Street, a long narrow lane, through which a carriage could hardly wend its way. I entered the paralytic woman's house: a dark passage without any porter's lodge led up to narrow staircase, which was likewise very dark. In order to ascertain on what storey Madame Lallemand resided, I knocked at two doors on the first landing.

"But no answer was returned.

"Supposing that those chambers must belong to working men absent for the day, I went up to the second storey, and knocked again—still no answer. Somewhat surprised at this lonely state of the dwelling, I went up to the third storey, and knocked several times in vain. I was going down, thinking I must have mistaken the number, when I heard the sound of footsteps approaching the door, and a child's voice inquired:—

"'Who 's there?'

"'Somebody from the Princess of Montbar, to see Madame Lallemand,' I replied.

"Thereupon the door was opened. I saw a little girl about eleven or twelve years' old, with a mild candid look.

"'Does Madame Lallemand live here?' said I to her, glancing my eye over the front room, at the bottom of which stood a flight of steps, doubtless leading to the lofts.

"'Yes, sir,' answered the child, 'she is in bed and unable to leave it.'

"'Can I see her to deliver a message from the princess?'

"'I will ask her, sir,' said the little girl; who, returning in a few moments, opened the door, and I went in.

"A woman, still young and interesting, and seemingly in great pain, was stretched upon a pallet in the middle of a room, which bespoke the deepest poverty. When I had told her that she would certainly have a visit the next morning from the princess, tears flowed from her eyes, and she expressed her gratitude in words so simple, so natural, so deeply felt, that I was acutely affected, and resolved to convey the same favourable impression to my mistress.

"When I now reflect, that all this on the part of that creature was a farce to conceal an infamous snare, I cannot account even now for so frightful an excess of dissimulation.

"I left Old Market Street so well satisfied with what I had seen and heard, that I never once thought of making inquiries about Madame Lallemand.

"Having returned to the hotel, I dressed myself neatly, as I was to attend on my mistress and the prince at table.

"On entering the buttery, I met the steward and the prince's old valet-de-chambre, named Louis, who said to me kindly:

"'My dear fellow! have you been to give a look to the parlour fire in madam's apartments?'

"'No, Mr. Louis,' said I, 'but I will go now.'

"'And don't forget when madam shall return, to be at the door, in the waiting-room, to receive her.'

"'I thank you, Mr. Louis; but how shall I know when madam returns?'

"'By the knocker; which strikes one tap for monsieur, and two for madam.'

"I went therefore into the princess's parlour to settle her fire; and as I was stooping over the hearth, I heard a noise in the next room, and presently the prince came out. I stood up, and made a respectful bow.

"'You are Madame de Montbar's new valet-de-chambre?' said the prince to me, almost without looking at me.

"'Yes, my prince.'

"'Very good,' said he, and left the apartment.

"'Although I had scarcely caught sight of M. de Montbar, he appeared to me rather vexed at being surprised in his wife's apartment. As soon as he was gone, as I happened to glance at the little table near Regina's arm-chair, I thought I observed a slight disorder among the articles which lay there; the piece of knitting had fallen on the floor, and the drawer was partly open. I shuddered, for I

was conscious that the indiscretion, if it came to be noticed, might be attributed to me.

"I was greatly distressed by this reflection, when suddenly I heard the sound of the carriage in the court-yard, and immediately after, the double knock.

"Attentive to Louis' instructions, I ran to the waiting-room to open the door: Regina came in.

"'Have you been to Mrs. Wilson's?'

"'Yes, your highness, but she was not at home.'

"'Then tell them in case a letter should be brought to me from Mrs. Wilson, to send it in directly.'

"'Yes, your highness.'

"'And the poor widow?'

"'I have seen her; she lives on the third floor of the house.'

"'Did you tell her I mean to call to-morrow morning?'

"'Yes, your highness.'

"'She is, no doubt, very badly off,' said Regina.

"'Yes, madam, extremely wretched.'

"'And the woman, I feel persuaded, is deserving?'

"'I think she merits all your highness's goodness.'

"'Well, so much the better; for——'

"Just then she broke off, and looking at the little work-table, she exclaimed:—

"'Has anybody been here during my absence?'

"'I do not know, your highness,' replied I, with stupid confusion.

"'It's very strange,' said she; and turning round, she eyed me stedfastly.

"I became purple, and instead of telling her the simple truth that I had seen the prince come out of the picture-room, I stood silent, and as painfully overcome as if I had been guilty.

"'You will order my carriage for half-past eight,' said the princess; who, after warming her feet for a moment entered the picture-gallery.

"Repenting my awkwardness, I went to the porters' lodge to execute my mistress's orders; Mr. Romarin, the porter, gave me two letters, one of which was from Mrs. Wilson, and three magnificent bouquets carefully wrapped over, and said to me, as he delivered them:

"'One of these bouquets came with this box of flowers from the florist's; the other two were brought by ticket-porter's who did not say whence they were sent.'

"When I returned to the princess's apartment, I met her chambermaid. She took charge of the flowers and bouquets, and I went to the dining-room to wait till it was time to serve at table.

"Almost immediately the folding-doors were thrown open: the prince came in with his wife. At a sign from the steward, I took my stand behind the princess's chair.

"The prince appeared to be cold and absent, and to affect an almost ceremonious politeness towards his wife; after a few unmeaning words, the following dialogue passed between them:

"'Are you going out this evening?' said the prince.

"'Yes, I am going to the opera.'

"'I thought this was not your usual night.'

"'Mrs. Wilson has invited me to her box; she is to call for me, and afterwards we are going to Madame de Beaumenil's.'

"'She gives a grand ball I believe?'

"'She opens her new hotel for the first time. They say it is quite a marvel—most luxuriant. Shall you look in for a moment?'

"'Certainly not,' said the prince; 'I loathe those crowded gatherings to which you are invited to extol in chorus, an insolent ostentation; besides, I am to sup to-night with a few friends, at Veny's; from thence, we start for Fontainebleau, where we are to hunt for several days.'

"'Shall you be long absent?'

"'A week at least—time enough for three or four hunting parties, as the pack cannot turn out more than once in two days.'

"'It will be a charming party; are there many of you?'

"'Not too many: the Marquis of Harvieur and his brother-in-law, the owner of the hounds, Blinval, Saint Maurice, Theonville, I, and Alfred de Dreure, the famous horse painter, who paints his models from nature. But, talking of pictures,' added the prince, 'do you know that I am jealous of your pictures?'

"'You do them really too much honour.'

"'Especially that new sea view, by Isabey—I can't get it out of my eyes—it is a masterpiece.'

"'It is indeed charming.'

"'So charming, that just now, during your absence, I went to admire it again.'

"So saying, and much to my surprise, the prince raised his eyes and fixed them for a moment upon me, as if this explanation had been given on my account; and thus the suspicions she may have harboured in respect to me must have fallen to the ground.

"'I am very happy the picture pleases you,' replied the princess; 'all I regret, is you should only come to admire it when I am out.'

"'When you are at home,' retorted he, 'you are always so surrounded, and, as you know, there is nothing so disagreeable as a husband in his wife's saloon in the forenoon. By the by, talking of your friends, is the handsome D'Erfeuil still as great a booby as ever?'

"'He is handsomer than ever.'

"'And D'Hervilliers still affects to sing, does he? always whispering to somebody to ask him to sing, that he may feign to withstand the entreaty. How natural it is, in a man, six foot high, with a drum-major's chest and the voice of a cathedral chorister!'

"'M. d'Hervillier's has improved: he now sings without coaxing.'

"'It's his death-cry,' said the Prince, pursuing his critical jeers; and that mighty man Dumolard—the brother of your *intimate friend*——' and here he laid a most ill-natured stress upon the words; 'does that huge tun-bellied gentleman still lend his box to the ladies?'

"'M. Dumolard is still cited for his enormous obligingness,' answered the princess.

"'But speaking of his sister,' resumed the prince almost spitefully; 'do you know that people talk a great deal—aye, a great deal—about your new friend, Mrs. Wilson.'

"'Of course they do; a woman of so much fashion. What would people talk about if they did not?'

"'Is there any Mr. Wilson?' asked the prince, with a meaning look.

"The princess frowned, and then answered with a forced smile:

"'What a singular question!'

"'First of all, people never see him.'

"'If the existence of those husbands who never appear in company were questioned,' replied Regina, confess that your own would be at stake.'

"'I do n't think so—or rather, I trust that there is no comparison to be drawn between me and Mr. Wilson,' said the prince, haughtily; 'for there are some things so ludicrous.'

"'Monsieur de Montbar, allow me to offer you some of this pine-apple jelly—it is delicious,' said the princess, interrupting her husband; who, understanding that his lady would not prolong this sort of discussion before us servants, accepted the jelly out of propriety, but without touching it; and continued after a short pause:

"'When I went into your rooms just now, I saw three or four large folios on your table. What does that mean?'

"'It 's a collection of engravings lent me by M. Just Clement. I wanted to choose out a dress for a fancy ball.'

"'How is Captain Just?' inquired the prince, more seriously, and partly hesitating.

"'M. Just Clement is still affected by his father's death, but his sorrow is calm and placid. Far from shunning an opportunity of speaking about his father, he looks for it, and I am always ready to afford him that consolation; for I revered and loved his noble father.'

"'Doctor Clement, was in sooth one of the most venerable of men,' returned the prince, 'and since we are speaking of him, I must tell you that the young physician he had recommended to us, left yesterday for Montbar. But to return to Captain Just. His low spirits must be ill at ease among all your young dandies.'

"'When M. Just Clement desires to see me,' answered the princess, 'he writes me a note in the morning, and I receive him sufficiently betimes to prevent the chance of his meeting a stranger.'

"'I approve the measure most highly. Captain Just has a claim to be particularly distinguished, not only on account of his sad and painful state of mind, but likewise for his personal merit; and, although still young, he is a man, I acknowledge, who is entitled to respect and deference.'

"These latter words were uttered by the prince in a tone of noble sincerity, which went to my heart. Madame de Montbar seemed to feel the same impression, for her dry and coldly polite tone was dropped, and her voice expanded and grew softer.

"'I am infinitely obliged to you,' resumed the princess, 'for your generous opinion of a man who is not, as they term it, one of *our set*; and who will become, I expect, one of my safest and best friends.'

"Whether or not the prince regretted his former effusion, he replied with a smile which I thought ironical:

"'You mean, I suppose, to grant the captain these privileges only so long as his mourning continues?'

"'Why so?' inquired Regina, gravely.

"'Why, the captain, though far less dandified than your dandies, is none the less charming;' said the prince, laughing, 'and if he be as lively as he is well-informed, he may be very dangerous.'

"'What nonsense!' replied she.

"'You do n't know Captain Just on the score of fascination. He has had some whimsical adventures; among others, there was a poor woman who forsook her friends to follow him into Algeria in spite of himself, and who was killed in an excursion

by the Arabs. You look doubtful—but it is true, however—I can tell you her name.'

"'I had rather not know it, that I may credit the adventure,' returned the princess smiling.

"She then stood up.

"'Excuse me,' added she, 'if I leave you so early; but I have to dress,—Mrs. Wilson is coming for me, and I should be sorry to keep her waiting.'

"The prince also left the table, and said to her:

"'Adieu! I shall not see you again before I go to Fontainebleau.'

"'Adieu,' said she, 'and do n't be long away.

"'I shall always be impatient to rejoin you, when absent,' said the prince; and they withdrew to their several apartments.

CHAPTER XXXI.

REGINA DEPARTS FOR THE BALL WITH MRS. WILSON.

"AFTER I had dined with my fellow-servants, I returned to the waiting-room, where I had been but a short time, when I heard the noise of a carriage driving into the hotel-yard. Soon after I ushered Mrs. Wilson into the princess's parlour.

"They spent a quarter of an hour together; and when they came out afterwards together, through one of the doors of the waiting-room, I was dazzled; for two women more charming, more perfectly beautiful, though differing so essentially from each other, it was impossible to see,—than the princess and her lively friend.

"Mrs. Wilson was fair and rosy, with blue eyes and black hair, and wore a green velvet dress; the princess, who was taller than Mrs. Wilson, and fully as slender, had on a straw-coloured robe with a short tunic of white gauze; a coronet of green leaves, without flowers, glittering with diamonds, was set on the pale and superb forehead of Regina. Her cheeks were slightly flushed; her three small dark spots contrasted with the moist carmine of her delicious lips and the fire of her large black eyes.

"When she came out of the parlour with Mrs. Wilson, they were both laughing; and nothing could be more charming than Regina's laugh, as it displayed the brilliant enamel of her pearl-like teeth; as she laughed she drew her bouquet to her lips with a motion full of gracefulness, as if half to conceal her mouth.

"'How cruel!' said Mrs. Wilson; 'among all that arsenal of splendid bouquettes, to choose the one furnished by your own florist.'

"'What names the envious fellows will call this poor bouquet of the shop,' said Regina.

"'The names of the leading beaux and fashionables in Paris will be called over,' retorted the lovely Mrs. Wilson.

"'Confess, my dear, that this is the emblem of many things. If people did but know what they envy!' said the princess thoughtfully.

"Here Julietta gave me a pair of small black silk shoes, lined with fur, and whispered to me:

"Give madame's shoes to Mrs. Wilson's footman, and tell him to mind he does not lose them.'

"Just as they were leaving the parlour, Mrs. Wilson said to the princess:

"'It 's dreadfully cold, my dear; wrap your cloak snugly about you.'

"Then she gave me her bouquet and handkerchief to hold, whilst she obeyed her friend's injunction, and said:

"'Martin, you will give them to me in the carriage.'

"The ladies went down the marble staircase. Mrs. Wilson, who was walking on a few steps before, perceiving that the princess's small foot was merely encased in a white satin shoe, reproved her kindly, saying:

"'What, my dear, would you go out in such cold weather without putting on your warm shoes?'

"'Your footman can give them to me after we leave the ball.'

"'You would catch your death. I can't allow it. Put them on directly!'

"'Pretty, dear tyrant,' said the princess, smiling, 'I suppose I must obey you.'

"Regina then turned to me.

"'Give me the handkerchief and bouquet, and put my fur shoes on,' said she, leaning on the banisters and holding out her foot to me.

"But what were my sensations when I held that beautiful foot in my hand, and saw the transparent skin through the light silk stocking! I thought I should have gone mad; my temples beat as if they would break; my hands glowed so hotly that my mistress ought to have noticed their warmth.

"When I had finished, she said:

"'Martin, you will wait my return.'

"'Yes, your highness,' I stammered out.

"The footmen of the household rose up respectfully along her passage, and two of them opened the folding-doors leading to the court-yard.

"I saw the two beautiful young women get into an elegant berline drawn by two magnificent grey horses, which in a moment hurried them away.

"Still shuddering under the sharp sensation of voluptuousness which I had enjoyed, I looked at the carriage as it rolled off, buried in a kind of ecstasy, when all at once I was recalled to the reality of things by the hoarse voice of one of the footmen, who, as he closed the hall-door after the departure of our mistress, exclaimed with vulgar coarseness:

"'Packed up!'

* * * *

* * *

"When I entered Miss Julietta's apartment my fellow-servants, and most of the expected visitors, had already assembled to take tea.

"I felt that I should hear certain domestic secrets betrayed that evening, far more important than those I had ever gleaned before from my connexion with servants, and that the lives of many distinguished persons were about to be exposed to me under a very novel aspect.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MISS JULIETTA, THE CHAMBERMAID, HAS AN EVENING PARTY, WHEN SOME GREAT PEOPLE ARE MADE LITTLE.

"I WAS greeted with much kindness by Miss Julietta's company of friends. She presented me to them, saying:

"'This is Mr. Martin, our new valet-de-chambre. Then showing and naming the various persons successively, Miss Julietta said:

"'Miss Isabeau, from Mrs. Wilson's.'

"'I have already had the pleasure of seeing this lady this morning,' said I, bowing.

"'Madame Lambert, from the Marchioness of Hervieux,' she continued, presenting a young woman with a very pleasing face, tastefully attired, and her hair dressed without a cap,

"'Miss Julietta concluded the list of ladies by introducing with a smile:

"'Miss Astarte, from the *Ministress* of Justice.'

"I bowed to Miss Astarte, whose name was so pompous; her countenance was pert and quizzical: she was about six and thirty. She must have been at one time remarkably pretty; her hair was fine and very dark; her teeth beautiful; her shape most elegant. The greatest lady could not have been dressed with more tasteful simplicity than Astarte.

"'We expected Madame Gabrielle, Count Duriveau's housekeeper,' said Miss Julietta; 'but her master is so terrible a tyrant, that no reliance can be placed on him.'

"On hearing this, I really congratulated myself on being present at the party.

"The masculine guests were not so numerous; they consisted of two of my brethren: Monsieur Bernard, the confidential servant of M. Lebouffe, the famous member; and M. Charles Leporello, valet-de-chambre to the Baron de Saint Maurice, the lion of all the lions, and nicknamed Don Juan.

"The same distinction was visible in the manners, the dress, and the faces of those two servants as existed between their masters. The confidential servant of the member was a tall man, dressed in black, stiff, serious and conceited, with scanty grey hair. He returned my bow with parliamentary complacency.

Leporello was a young, well-looking lad, with a bold sprightly face neatly formed, and free in his manners; his dress had apparently belonged to his master, and sat well upon him. He appeared to me the pet of all the ladies present, and was very attentive to Miss Astarte, the queen of the entertainment.

"'We also expected the handsome Felix,' said Julietta, 'but we must not rely upon him any more than upon Madame Gabrielle, Count Duriveau's housekeeper.'

"'I suppose his master,' said I to Julietta, 'is as great a tyrant as Count Duriveau?'

"This question was met with a general burst of laughter. Seeing me disconcerted, the confidential servant came to my relief, and observed:

"'If the *honourable* gentleman did not know in whose service the handsome Felix is, his question is very natural.'

"'True, true,' said the company.

"'My dear fellow,' said Leporello to me with an easy air, 'the handsome Felix has no master, but only a mistress, who is his——you understand?'

"'Oh, Leporello! Leporello!' cried several voices reproachfully; 'what a sad fellow you are! You have quite confounded Mr. Martin.'

"And truly, I had thought of Regina, and had blushed, and in spite of every effort to reply with a firm steady voice, I stammered out:

"'Indeed—I do—not—rightly understand you.'

"'This is the matter,' replied Leporello with insolent assurance: 'the handsome Felix is in the service of the Marchioness Corbinelli: he is six foot two—five and twenty; he has a fine healthy red face, and superb dashing whiskers, as black as Astarte's hair. Now, compare all these advantages with his old marchioness, who is fifty, rouges, and wears a brown wig, and you will then understand, my dear fellow, why I tell you this Felix's mistress is *his*. Well, be frank, does this astonish you!'

"'Why, yes, it does astonish me,' replied I, suppressing my confusion; 'and I think it must appear very astonishing to every body. Don't you think so, ladies?'

"'Astonishing? Why, no,' said Astarte; 'it is not so common, perhaps, as to see masters make mistresses of their wives' chambermaids, but still such things do happen; and I recollect when I lived with the Duchess of Rullecourt, there was the famous story of the Baroness de Surville with the big Laforêt, her husband's huntsman.'

"'Besides,' remarked old Louis, 'I was told by my father, that during the old *régime* the court ladies kept men-servants to dress their hair, and that the rascals——but, you understand.'

"'Under the old *régime*, I dare say,' added the old confidential servant, puffing out his cheeks, 'there were no morals at that time; that was the age of Louis XV., the Parc aux Cerp, and red heels.'

"'Good,' said Leporello, laughing, 'here's old Benard setting off, like his master.'

"'Astarte,' said Julietta, 'do you still continue to plague your ministress?'

"'I should think I did. For instance: this evening she did not want to go out before ten to the Home Minister's ball. Ah! that's it, is it? Well, I who wanted to be here at eight, I told her I was going out, and made her dress directly after dinner, and that speedily. It was enough to make one die of laughing, for she eats like a giant. And there she is now, decked out in all her finery, and sitting right before the clock till it is time to sally forth to the ball.'

"'You must have a talisman, miss,' said I to Astarte, 'to do what you like with your mistress.'

"'Her talisman,' said Julietta laughing, 'is this. She lived fifteen years as the principal maid to the Duchess of Rullecourt, the most celebrated belle of the Restoration; and Madame Poliveau—that's the name of her ministress—is so proud of having in her service a principal chambermaid to a duchess, that Astarte does what she thinks proper in that house, where they are only too glad to have her.'

"'Ah! now I understand,' said I to Astarte.

"'That's my whole secret,' answered she. 'But these people are so vulgar, so stupid, so lumpish, nothing can be made of them. However, it's very funny sometimes, when one of the colleagues of my mistress comes to see her; as for instance, Madame Galemord, of the Board of Trade, or the ministress of the Home Department, whose grandfather, on the mother's side, was a porter, my mistress rings for me on pretence of giving me some order; and then says to the ladies in a whisper, looking at me all the while: 'That's my chamberwoman: she was fifteen years with the celebrated Duchess of Rullecourt,' and then my mistress looks quite elated whilst the others are chap-fallen.'

"'Oh! that's the very thing,' cried Leporello, chuckling. 'I know a fool of a master, who always bows first to his coachman, because he was once in the service of the famous Lord Chesterfield.'*

"'Another farce,' resumed Astarte. 'From morning till night, my mistress keeps saying to me: My dear child, how used the duchess to dress? how used the duchess to wear her hair? What sort of nightcaps did the duchess put on? I think, God forgive me! she will one day ask how the duchess——'

"Here a general roar of hilarity very opportunely stopped the mettle of Astarte, who continued:

"'And then the minister, too! How vain, how ignorant the poor citizen is. My good Astarte, how used the duke to dress of an evening? How used his table to be served? One day he wanted to romp a bit, and said to me: My chuck, I am sure the duke thought you very pretty, and gave you proofs of his liking.

"'No, sir, answered I to the fat fellow. For if he wanted to prove it, the duke would have broached the matter by presenting me with a bank note for five thousand pounds to furnish a house. On hearing this, the minister gaped and said, Umph! umph! and sneaked off. And yet it would have been diverting enough to have undertaken to teach good manners to a Minister of Justice; but he is so ugly, so dirty, so miserly, that I threatened to tell his wife if he persisted. Thus, thanks to my rigid morals, I do what I like in the house; I give away clerkships and usherships as if they poured down from the clouds. Does anybody want any of them?'

"'Faith! when the time comes, such offers are worth having, to serve a friend,' said Leporello.

"'I claim your protection for the brother of one of my friends,' said the chambermaid to the Mar-

* The famous Lord Chesterfield has been dead about eighty years; and the amiable and spirited nobleman who now holds that rank, would be equally amused at the epithet attached to his name, and the reverence it appears to inspire among French diplomatists.

chioness of Hervieux. 'I will remind you of it, Astarte.'

"'Whenever you please. I shall only have to say to my minister: the duke, who was a gentleman of the chamber to Charles X., would never have refused a favour to any member of his establishment. I tell you there is nothing so proud as these low upstart *parvenus*.'

"'When I think,' remarked our steward, 'that I had a cousin, a good worthy lad, a clerk to a tradesman, who, previous to the revolution of July, belonged to a secret society, in which they used to swear over their daggers, hatred to kings, to nobles, and to the clergy, and that he has a hundred times, Astarte, seen your minister, who was then plain Mr. Poliveau, rave like a madman whilst taking that oath.'

"The conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of our cook; that personage came in with magisterial pomp, followed by his assistant, bearing on a tray five or six plates piled up with cakes fresh from the oven. The company greeted this culinary treat with live indications of approval. The cakes were placed upon a table, by the side of a tea-service of pretty English china. The poor assistant, obedient to the laws of the hierarchy below stairs, made his exit, glancing covetously at the cakes and the pretty guests of Julietta.

"'I beg your pardon, gentlemen and ladies,' said the cook, 'if I present myself in uniform,' pointing to his white jacket and cotton cap; 'but you will excuse the costume of a soldier just come from the field.'

"'There's your best apology,' said Astarte, graciously, looking at the cakes elegantly piled up on the plates.

"'I believe, indeed, that the ladies will relish my apology,' returned the cook; 'I recommend you, vanity aside, to try those *bergeres à la crême, piques aux fraises*,—it's a real dainty at this season of the year. The great Careme, under whose orders I had the honour to serve at the Congress of Vienna, had introduced them to the table of the French Ambassador, on the eve of that fatal dinner——'

"'Come, cook, in favour of Mr. Martin, who is unacquainted with the story,' said Julietta, laughing, 'we'll listen to it again.'

"'What story?' said Leporello.

"'That makes two who have never heard,' cried Astarte, merrily. 'So proceed, and tell your tale, cook, without fear.'

"'For my part,' said I, 'I long to hear the story.'

"'If I repeat the narrative so often,' resumed the culinary artist with a serious look, 'it is that I may protest again and again against a base act of treason, of which I maintain no French cook could have been capable.'

"'Zounds! this looks serious,' said Leporello.

"'Our honour, sir, was concerned in it,' cried the formal Culinarian, who perfectly understood his company. 'In two words, this is the fact. We were at Vienna; I had the honour to serve under the orders of the great Careme, at the French Ambassador's; the members of the diplomatic corps used to dine in rotation at each other's houses; and they called it jocosely, dining in France, in England, in Russia, &c. &c. You may conceive the rivalry that existed among the gentlemen cooks. The day preceding the signing of the treaty, they were dining at the Prince of Metternich's; this was the most important dinner of the Congress, so important, indeed, that the prince had even deigned to correct the bill of fare with his own hand, and to annex as a note: This dinner must be conducted as a dinner of crowned heads. I have seen the autograph. I have got a copy of it among my papers.'

"'This grows most interesting,' said I to the cook. 'One would think it was a state affair.'

"'It was one, sir, that concerned all Europe!' cried the diplomatic cook, 'and you shall soon see wherefore. There had been, as I said, a dreadful rivalry among the gentlemen cooks serving the Ambassadors, but it was a fair and honourable rivalry. Unfortunately, that honourable spirit came to an end. On the day of that solemn dinner, some coward, some villain, instead of maintaining the conflict manfully, with open oven, bribed with sordid gold one of the scullions of the Prince of Metternich, and some abominable drug was mingled in several of the dishes of that regal entertainment, prepared with so much fond respect by the prince's own gentleman cook. And then——'

"'Oh! oh! I guess the result,' said Leporello, laughing.

"'They had not yet reached the dessert,' cried the cook, waxing warm with generous indignation, 'before several members of the diplomatic corps, assailed by serious stomachic qualms, were compelled to leave the table. A few were attacked by slight indisposition, and the signing of the treaty was put off for several days; and God only knows how many new intrigues may have been hatched in the mean time!' added the cook, with a mysterious and significant look.

"'It must be owned,' said Leporello, 'it was giving a strange turn to affairs.'

"'The worst of the matter,' added the cook pathetically, 'was that the conspirator was never known; and suspicion fell successively on England, on Russia, and on France! On France—oh! never, I protest—I ever will protest. If I were permitted to name any party, I should accuse Prussia; for her head-cook was an unfortunate scullion, only worthy to dress a dinner for one of your ministers, Miss Astarte.'

"'True,' returned she, 'a minister's dinner now-a-days, is a sorry thing, to be sure.'

"'With one exception,' resumed the cook, 'for we must be equitable. His Excellency Count Molé was the only minister who, when he filled the Foreign Office, ever produced a dinner of fifty covers fit to be cited; but then we must remember, Count Molé is a great nobleman, who has retained the good old traditionary usages.'

"After this culinary narrative, the servants soon got upon the subject of scandal, and then they very naturally praised their own discretion, and boasted of their own power.

"'Masters ought not to rule us so despotically,' said Leporello; 'for if we chose——'

"'Leporello is right,' said Astarte; 'masters in general treat us too badly; and yet how often it would depend on us to set the house topsy-turvy, to cause divisions in families, law-suits, and fatal duels.'

"'True, true,' cried several of the guests.

"'For my part,' continued Madame Lambert, 'I know somebody who might be sent to the galleys, one of the first people in the land, too; and his wife with him, she who is all day long in church, and who affects the fine lady.'

"'Indeed!' cried the company with one voice.

"'And, moreover,' continued Madame Lambert, 'the whole family, which is still more stingy than hypocritical, might be upset, though they have 300,000 francs a-year, and upwards.'

"'Tell us how?'

"'It was requisite for the lady to have a child in order to inherit the property of a rich uncle. Seeing she could not contrive to get pregnant, she and her husband agreed that they would simulate the blessed state. It became necessary for my mistress, for I am speaking of my own affairs, to open her mind to me, her chamber-woman. I set about hunting for a woman in the family way, and then took lodgings for her in a quet and remote district. This was in the country; my mistress pretended to be taken ill just as the real sufferer felt her pains coming on; and I received the child, a

very fine boy, upon my word. I carried it home in a band-box, and when the stupid country midwife arrived, she found a big baby crying like fury to suckle the nurse already secured for the purpose.'

"'Oh, the cunning tricksters!' cried Leporello. 'Who could beat that?'

"'Well!' resumed Madame Lambert, 'believe me or not, as you like, but I was turned away from that house on the score—of *morality*, because they found the coachman in my bed-room. I was indignant. I threatened my mistress with exposure. Guess her answer?'

"'What was it?'

"'You may go and make your declaration, my dear, but remember, an accomplice is punished as well as the guilty party.'

"'The vile creature!' cried Astarte.

"'And that woman is never out of a church!' chimed in Julietta.

"'She was right,' added Madame Lambert. 'I should have ruined her and myself too. But, by the bye,' resumed the chambermaid to the Marchioness of Hervieux, looking at Julietta, 'you said you knew something that would please my mistress.'

"'She knows it already, perhaps; but, however, here it is. The prince starts this night for Fontainebleau, where he is to hunt for week with your mistress's husband.'

"'How artful that man is!' said Madame Lambert; 'we knew nothing of it this evening at home, but that's always the way with him: whenever the marquis leaves home he never lets us rejoice till the very last moment. Yes, my mistress will be glad. Now it is that she will want the hackney-coach, to go out for six hours at a time, come home to dinner, and then scribble a letter of eight pages long, which I shall have to carry in the morning, and to which M. de Surville will reply in a couple of lines.'

"'I thought they had fallen out?' said Julietta.

"'So they had; for six months poor dear madam, good creature! was near dying; she drooped and pined away most piteously. But now she is become quite charming again, her lover is so much to her mind.'

"'It's perfectly right,' said Astarte; 'her husband 's such a ninny.'

"'And so slovenly!' said Madame Lambert. 'We servants are good judges of that. If the world only knew what we know, three-fourths of those ladies who take lovers would be excused.'

"'I always excuse them, I do,' said Astarte; 'for they always make the best mistresses; it renders them so mild, so gentle, so very bland. And you, Isabeau, any news at your place?'

"'Oh! our people,' replied Mrs. Wilson's chambermaid, 'are as gay and merry as ever; my mistress says good-morning and good-night to old daddy Wilson, who is never out of his counting-house; and she adores her little angel daughter—that's all.'

"'How odd,' said Astarte.

"'The fact is,' rejoined Leporello, 'I never heard a whisper against Mrs. Wilson at my master's; and God knows how your women of fashion are spoken of at his house.'

"'And here?' said Astarte, looking at Regina's chambermaid.

"I felt an extraordinary and most acute pain whilst waiting for Julietta's answer; who suddenly exclaimed:

"'How's this, where is old Louis?'

"He was the prince's valet-de-chambre,—every eye was turned towards the seat which that ancient had occupied; but he had prudently stolen off, without any of the company noticing his departure.

"'He must have cut, most certainly,' continued Julietta, 'when he saw the party turning to gossip; he hates it. After all, so much the better, he's nothing but a bore; and you can't get a word from him about our master.'

"I was struck with the discretion of the honest fellow; the only person, probably, who was acquainted with the after-dark excursions and nightly rambles of the Prince of Montbar.

"'You are right, Julietta,' resumed Mrs. Wilson's maid; 'old Louis would have been an incubus. Well! I was asking you what news have you here, since the princess has taken to balls and parties with my mistress. Have you seen any thing?'

"'No, really; madame receives every morning the cream of your Parisian beaux and fashionables; she dresses herself in superb toilets; anonymous bouquets are sent in by scores, and she disdains them all for that of her own florist. That's all I know. Besides, you know, ladies and gentlemen, if we chamberwomen, for many reasons, often know the end of little matters, we do n't know the beginning of them;—that concerns the valets-de-chambre. For they usher in the visitors, and may notice how long they stay—whether Madame is alone or not,—they may observe them when they retire, and whether they look pleased or displeased. That's all very significant. I once heard old Lapierre, who had lived many years with Princess Romanoff, remark:—that the gentlemen almost always took their gloves off at the fifth or sixth *tête-à-tête*.'

"'A keen remark, that,' cried Astarte.

"'Consequently,' added Julietta, 'if you want to hear news, you must apply to Mr. Martin; but he only took office this morning.'

"'Faith, miss,' said I to Julietta, 'things must be very plain indeed, for me to see them; I am but a poor observer.'

"'Psha!' returned she, laughing; 'those things are seen without being looked for. Your predecessor, Honoré, was not very sharp, and yet he remarked for all that, that Captain Just, that fine tall young man, had called three times at an hour when madam usually receives no visitors.'

"'So, so,' said Astarte, with a loud peal, 'do you call that nothing, Julietta.'

"'I am of the same opinion as Julietta, Miss Astarte,' said I; 'it is but a short time since Captain Just lost his father, and I heard madam say to the prince, at dinner, that the captain was so much out of spirits that he was averse to meet company at her house; that must be madam's reason for receiving him by himself.'

"'Never mind,' returned Astarte, with a radiant look of glee. 'I tell you there is nothing more killing than your fine melancholy young fellows, six foot high; I advise you to watch that young man, Mr. Martin, and when you shall do me the favour to come and take tea at the minister's, you will have your little story to tell; so listen, and let each pay his score.'

"'Which our masters must contribute to,' said I, laughing, the better to hide the pain I felt.

"'After all,' resumed Astarte, 'you see it's among ourselves only; to each other we speak openly, and disguise nothing; but we do n't betray any thing out of our own circle. We might do terrible mischief, and yet I am sure not one of us has ever divulged a secret to the prejudice of any master.'

"'True,' said the confidential servant; 'and yet if we liked!'

"Just then the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Madame Gabrielle, the housekeeper to Count Duriveau.

"This woman's arrival raised my anxiety and excited my attention to the highest degree.

"'How late you are, my dear,' said Julietta. 'The cakes and tea are quite cold.'

"'I am quite fortunate in being able to come at all, look you!' replied the woman, who was rather elderly, tall, and of a masculine figure. 'I never thought I should get away. Master is such a tyrant!'

"'That's what I was telling these ladies,' said Julietta. But by what good luck did you escape?'

"'Good luck's the word. You must know, then, that for several days master has been as gruff as a bull-dog, as he is usually; but he has, besides, a great objection to let any of us out unless we ask his permission, just to exercise his odious tyranny.'

"'What a man! what a man!' said Astarte.

"'As to that, Julietta,' said the housekeeper, 'your mistress may thank her stars that she did not marry my master.'

"'I do n't doubt it; she always hated him,' resumed Julietta, 'and since madam's marriage, he has never set foot in this house.'

"'And spiteful enough he must feel about it, no doubt. But to return to my story; I asked him this morning to let me go out this evening. No! he replied, with a face as black as Old Nick's. But this evening I met him on the stairs—he was quite altered—full of smiles; never did I see him look so pleasant before. What! said he, my dear Mrs. Gabrielle, you asked me to let you go out and I refused you. Yes, count; said I. Well, go, if you like, I am in good humour, and I wish every body to be pleased. Then up stairs he went humming a tune.'

"'But what could have happened to make him so merry?' asked Julietta.

"'That's what I wondered at,' resumed Madame Gabrielle; 'there must be something new, said I to myself, and I must make it out, to serve for my score at Miss Julietta's tea party. So off I ran to master's valet, for we agree very well, because I lend him the linen of our house for his family at home. 'Well! Ballard,' said I to him, 'what news now? Master looks as merry as a screech-owl pouncing on a poor little mouse.'

"'I do n't know,' replied Ballard.

"'Come, Ballard; between friends?

"'Upon my life, my dear, all I know, is that just as master was going to sit down to dinner with a face as black as my shoe, a ticket-porter brought him a letter on dirty course paper, and closed with paste. I gave it to master, who read it and cried—*At last!* with a look so joyful! after burning the letter, he walked about the room, or rather skipped about it, rubbing his hands, stroking his chin, and laughing. That's all I know, my dear Madame Gabrielle. I was obliged to believe him. So, now give me a cup of tea with a thimble full of rum in it, my little Julietta; for I am choking with thirst.'

"Singular presentiment! On hearing this story of the housekeeper's, I felt that I had found a secret. The atrocious joy of that wicked man could bode no good to some one. It bespoke a great injury to some object that he hated,—it was the savage joy of a vindictive mind!

"Now I recalled to mind the apprehensions of Doctor Clement, and his instructions to me to watch Duriveau. I was sure that some evil was impending over Regina. But what could I do to prevent it? The prince—the natural defender of his wife—was gone to Fontainebleau.

"These thoughts alarmed me so much, that I was tempted a moment to distrust my fears; and continued to listen attentively to the conversation of Julietta's guests, without having any desire or spirit to mix in it. In spite of my attention, I could glean nothing more. The guests left the hotel about one o'clock; the handsome Felix, the lover of the Italian marchioness, not having shown himself.

"The princess had ordered me to await her return. I had just been to her apartment, rekindled her parlour fire, and lighted her wax candles, when the rustle of the carriage wheels in the court-yard announced her return. When I opened the door of her ante-chamber, I was struck with the expression of her countenance.

"I had seen her set out, laughing, with her cheeks flushed, her eye radiant, and her brow upraised and stately; I saw her return, dull and pale with lassitude, and brooding came in every feature. After throwing her mantle on an elbow chair, she said:

"'Don't forget, as I told you, to go to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock, and make inquiries about my father.'

"'I shall be sure not to forget, your highness.'

"Regina giving me no further orders, I was moving off; she called me back, saying:

"'As you may, perhaps, not have returned when I go out, you will order the porter to call me a hackney-coach at half-past eight.'

"'Then, your highness intends to visit the woman, Mrs. Lallemand?' said I to Regina.

"She was standing near the hearth, when I put this question; she turned round to me with an air so astonished, so full of dignity, that I felt at once the silly indiscreet familiarity of my inquiry; I looked down, confused. I presume the princess observed my disorder, for she said to me, kindly:

"'Don't forget to call at my father's; and on your return you will busy yourself in attending to this apartment, and arranging my flowers, as I instructed you to do this morning.'

"I then withdrew, letting fall the cloth portal of the parlour.

"Involuntarily I stood by for a moment; and that was enough to enable me to hear Regina sink into an arm-chair, and exclaim with an accent of lassitude, *ennui*, and inexpressible distress:

"'Alone, my God! always alone, oh! what a life! what a life it is!'

"Terrified at the kind of secret I had thus surprised, I hastened to leave the apartment of the princess; closed the door carefully, and went up to my own chamber—dare I confess it even to myself with thoughts far less bitter, less acutely sorrowful than when I saw the beautiful Regina set out for the ball in all the glittering splendour of her charms.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MARTIN DISCOVERS THE PLOT AGAINST THE PRINCESS OF MONTBAR.

"AFTER a night almost entirely spent in watchfulness, during which I vainly strove to guess the peril which I foresaw impended over Regina, I arose, having nothing better to trust to than some lucky inspiration. I called at the Baron de Noirlieu's, whither I had never returned since my visit with Count Robert's letter. I expected to be recognised by the mulatto, but was not.

"'I come, sir,' said I to him, 'on the part of the Princess of Montbar, whose service I entered yesterday, to make inquiries as to the baron's health.'

"'The baron is still in the same state,' replied the servant rudely. 'You will tell the princess so.'

"Melchior looked so surly, and so taciturn, that it appeared no easy task to enter into any conversation with him; nevertheless I continued:

"'I will deliver that answer to her highness, who, doubtless, will grieve to hear it.'

"'Probably so,' returned the mulatto, turning his back upon me, after pointing to the gate; for we were then standing on the steps leading to the hall.

"I was going to retire, when I saw the baron coming from the ante-chamber. He had on a dressing-gown made of grey flannel, and was leaning on a stick. He seemed to me to be still more careworn, more broken than when I had seen him a year before at the Louvre. The same fierce scowl and sullen mournfulness contracted the old man's features.

"On hearing the dragging steps of his master, Melchior appeared greatly mortified, although he repeated in a low imperative whisper—

"'Be off! Be off!'

"I remained, and heard the baron say to Melchior on perceiving me—

"'Melchior, who is that man?'

"'Be off then,' repeated the mulatto in a low growl.

"Then turning towards his master, he said to him in a tone of tender reproof—

"'Go in, baron, it's very cold. Come along.

"He moved a step forward to lead off the baron, who was yielding mechanically to him, when I went up, and said aloud to M. de Noirlieu—

"'I come from the Princess of Montbar, to make inquiries about the baron's health.'

"Regina's father started. His face appeared to me to betray the painful emotions of an inward struggle; then retracing his steps, whilst Melchior darted furious looks at me.

"'How is my daughter?' said the old man with feelings which he strove in vain to dissemble.

"'Her highness is still unwell, monsieur le baron.'

"'Ill! is she ill! my Regina?' cried the old man. I did not know that,' he added, looking surprised and distrustfully at Melchior.

"Then turning to me again, he inquired eagerly—'How long has my daughter been ill? What's the matter with her? Is she confined to her bed? Well, why don't you answer, then.

"Melchior cut off the colloquy, saying to his master with a satirical smile—

"'I can appease your alarm, baron. Even so late as yesterday, the princess went to the ball; so that her illness must, fortunately, be very slight.'

"'Did she go to the ball?' asked the father.

"Yes, baron,' I replied; 'but on her return the princess seemed so dejected—so tired.'

"'Tired of dancing!' resumed the baron, and a cold irony overspread his features, and banished those looks of concern which at first beamed forth whilst he was speaking of his child. The mulatto presented his arm to his master with a triumphant look, and both returned into the house.

"In spite of the unfortunate issue of my meeting with Regina's father, I valued myself upon my discovery that the baron, although unhappily he believed that Regina was not his daughter, had retained an attachment to her which all his affected aversion could not banish; moreover, I remarked that Melchior appeared to hate Regina, and to use the influence he possessed over the baron to provoke his irritability against his daughter.

"I left the hotel, happy to think that the account of the little incident I had witnessed would please Regina, by proving to her that her father's affection for her was not extinguished.

"This smiling hope had almost obliterated my anxiety in respect to Count Duriveau, when an unforeseen occurrence, very insignificant in appearance, soon came to change my suspicious fears into a frightful reality.

"The Baron of Noirlieu lived in the Faubourg du Roule. I had returned to the Faubourg Saint Germain, by the bridge of Louis XV. and the Quai d'Orsay. I had advanced as far as the middle of the Rue de Beaure, when whom should I see coming along but Madame Gabrielle, the housekeeper to Count Duriveau; the latter lived in the Rue de l'Universite, the hotel of Montbar being situated in the Rue Saint Dominique. When Madame Gabrielle came up, she said to me—

"'Oh, Mr. Martin! good day to you; I did not expect to see you so soon again, especially at this early hour.'

"'True, madam, it is hardly nine o'clock.'

"'That's what vexes me; for I must go the devil knows where to find a hackney-coach; at this season of the year they come so late to their stands, and master is in such a fume to go out.'

"'What! he who has so many horses, does he go out in a hackney-coach? and does he send you out to fetch one, when he has so many male servants?'

"'I am not the only one looking out for the cursed coach! the steward and valet-de-chambre are hunting after it likewise.'

"'If your master is so eager to go out, why does he not get ready one of his carriages?'

"'No doubt he has his reasons. There is something queer beneath it all. Ballard tells me there has been another letter this morning like that of yesterday. You remember.'

"Perfectly. How funny it was—a coarse dingy letter, closed with paste.'

"'Well, now, there's been another this morning, with a message by the ticket-porter to call master up directly; then there was indeed the devil to pay, and an order to fetch a hackney-coach at any price.'

"A thought, which almost drove me crazy, flitted through my brain. My confusion was so manifest, that the housekeeper said to me:—

"'What ails you, Mr. Martin?'

"This question recalled me to my senses. I answered the housekeeper:

"'Why, I was thinking, Madame Gabrielle, that instead of allowing you to waste your time, I might save you a labour. I came this moment by the Quai Voltaire, and saw two or three coaches on the stand. I will run back and bring you one to the gate of the Hotel Duriveau.'*

"'Oh! Mr. Martin, how good-natured it is of you to take so much trouble.'

"'No trouble at all,' said I, running off, 'we are neighbours. In less than ten minutes the coach will be at your door.'

"So saying I sped away towards the Quai Voltaire, whilst Madame Gabrielle cried out after me:

"'Thank you, good Mr. Martin.

"The thought I had conceived was this:

"A damnable plot is laid for Regina, in Old Market-street. They have appealed to the princess's pity to lure her into an ambush. In that lonely house there is no porter, and no lodgers, but that impostor of a widow who pretends she has got the palsy. One of the two letters Count Duriveau received must have informed him that Regina was going this very morning to the house. What would follow next between her and that pitiless man, of an iron will, and ready to do anything to satiate his hatred and his passions? To think of it made me shudder.

"By offering my services to the housekeeper, I wished to effect two objects: to prevent the count getting a coach, and to use it myself; for I had, indeed, when coming by, descried a coach in the Quai Voltaire.

"But still, what was I to do? I could not apply to the prince; he was absent. Whom then should I apply to. I thought of Captain Just.

"To give to another, and that other young, handsome, generous, and brave, the means of saving the woman I secretly adored with the fondest passion, required a world of courage; but Regina's honour was at stake, and I did not hesitate to do it.

"On reaching the Quai Voltaire, I found two hackney-coachmen on the stand, one of whom providentially proved to be the excellent man who had rescued me from starvation, and who had driven home Regina after the scene of the mock marriage.

"'A good day for me, since I met you this morning, old fellow,' said Jerome to me, holding out his hand. 'It's some time since ——'

"'The life of a woman as dear to me as a mother is at stake,' said I, interrupting Jerome, and springing into the coach. 'I can't stop now to explain a word. Have you got a pencil and paper?'

* I must remind the reader that *hotel*, in the French language, signifies mansion as well as an inn or lodging-house, and is constantly used in speaking of the houses of the rich and great people.—*Translator's note.*

"'Here's my pocket-book,' said he. 'Where are we going to?'

"'Rue Saint Louis, at the corner of the quai; and fly like the wind.'

"During the drive I wrote the following note on one of the pages out of the pocket-book:—

"An awful danger threatens the Princess of Montbar. Count Duriveau has set an infamous trap for her. Go at once to No. 11, Old Market-street: on the third story, ask for Mrs. Lallemand; if nobody answers, burst the door open. Take your pistols. The princess is there, and possibly a prisoner. There is a coach waiting for you, and the driver is a stanch fellow, whom you may rely upon.

"An Unknown Friend.

"The coach stopped at the corner of the quai; I got out, and gave the note I had written to Jerome, saying:

"'Go to No. 17.'

"'Good.'

"'Ask for Captain Just.'

"'Good.'

"'Tell them to give him this note instantly.'

"'Good.'

"'As it is a question of life or death!'

"'Heyday!'

"'If the captain asks who sent the letter, say an elderly man with grey hair.'

"'Very well.'

"'Then drive him to Old Market-street, No. 11.'

"'I see.'

"'Shall you return by the quai?'

"'Yes: that's my road.'

"'If you carry the captain you won't stop; but you need not wonder if I get up behind your vehicle.'

"'I understand you.'

"'But if the captain is not at home?'

"'Then return here, and I will get in again.'

"'Farewell!' said Jerome; driving off at full speed.

"I awaited Jerome's return in great perplexity of mind.

"Nine o'clock struck by Notre Dame. Regina, who was to leave her hotel at half-past eight, must now be very near Old Market-street; and if any of Count Duriveau's people had found a hackney-coach, that wicked man could not be far off from the scene of his contemplated villainy.

"At last the quick rolling of a carriage drew near. I looked cautiously out;—the captain was within it; and his mourning habit rendered still more pallid his fine features, disordered by the violence of his feelings.

"When the carriage came by my hiding-place, I sprang forward to get up behind it. The foot-board was studded with a semicircle of sharp bits of pointed iron. I took my resolution, however, and reckoning on my former nimbleness as a tumbler, I attempted to leap over the points. Happily I succeeded, almost entirely; but a shake of the coach causing me to stumble as I alighted on the board, after clearing the crescent of sharp studs, one of them ploughed my leg rather deeply. There was no leather strap to hold by, so I clung as well as I could to the roof, with my knees stuck to the box; and as I knew perfectly well that the slightest loss of balance must jerk me back upon the iron studs, I resolved to be very careful accordingly.

"Suddenly the coach stopped; Jerome, doubtless, recollected how difficult it would be for me to get behind his carriage, and raised himself up in his box, and looked back with anxiety.

"I made him a sign to go on; and at the same moment I heard Captain Just exclaim,

"'Coachman, what now? Drive on—blood and thunder! Forty francs for the job, and go like hell!'

"'Forward!' cried Jerome.

"But even then the warm-hearted fellow found means to turn about, to fasten to the back of his coach-box one of his horses spare straps, and to fling me the other end.

"'Hold to this; there won't be so much danger.'.

"The rustle of the wheels most probably prevented the captain hearing him; and, thanks to my honest friend's contrivance, I kept my stand, though I felt my blood trickle down my legs under my clothes.

"When we drew near Old Market-street, I jumped down. The coach rolled along with the captain. I took out my handkerchief, and bound it very tightly about my leg; thus relieving me very considerably, for a time at least.

"I was just about to enter the narrow street, when I descried another coach, with horses quite spent and foaming, drawn up a few yards from the corner.

"'Coachman,' said I to the man, 'did you not drive hither a gentleman from the Rue de l'Universite?'

"'Yes: a capital job; and my horses, you see, are done up.'

"'Have you been long here?'

"'Not above a quarter of an hour.'

"'Have you seen any other coach come this way?'

"'Yes, about five minutes back. It was tearing along like mad.'

"'But before that?—didn't you see another pass up this street?'

"'Oh! yes; about ten minutes ago, a blue carriage and white horses. But it was in no hurry, and there was a woman inside.'

"I was now certain. Count Duriveau had anticipated Regina in that lonely house.

"Fortunately, Captain Just had arrived almost upon the steps of the princess.

"I hurried along Old Market-street, and saw Jerome drawn up before No. 11.

"'You are hurt, my worthy lad,' said he, on remarking my leg bandaged.

"'What of the captain?' I inquired.

"'He sprang out of the coach without waiting for the steps to be lowered.'

"'He did not tell you to accompany him?'

"'No: but it seems there 's something hot to be done, for I caught sight of the snout of a pistol sticking from the pocket of his riding coat.'

"'Wait here, my honest fellow,' returned I, rushing up the passage, 'and not a word about me to the captain.

"'Never fear,' said Jerome, patting his fuming steeds, 'I never blab,—I am as silent as the man in the moon.'

"Alas! thought I, as I went forward, there was only five minutes' delay,—I have done my best to baffle the villain; but have I rescued Regina!

CHAPTER XXXV.

COUNT DURIVEAU DISCOVERS THAT THERE IS A SECRET FRIEND TO BAFFLE A DESIGNING ENEMY.

"I REACHED the landing on the third floor,—where the abominable wretch, Madame Lallemand lived; and I heard the loud voice of Captain Just saying to the false invalid,—

"'The Princess of Montbar is here! I tell you.'

"'Alas! my good gentleman,' replied the wretch, in a whining voice, 'I assure you she is not.'

"'She is here:—you have drawn her into a snare, miserable strumpet.'

"'Do n't hurt my poor mother, my good gentleman,' cried the child, uniting her complaints to those of her mother.

"'Where is the princess?' roared the captain; and no doubt laying his hands on the creature as he spoke, for she shrieked out with terror—

"'Mercy, sir!—you are breaking my arm.'

"'Mother—oh! poor mother,' cried the child.

"'Alas! sir, you see we have nothing but these two wretched rooms,' said the wench;—'where could the princess be?'

"Suddenly more distant cries reached my ears: dumb, and stifled they were, as though they had issued from a chamber contiguous to that where the mock-patient lay,—a chamber doubtless out of view, as I had anticipated.

"The voice was Regina's, crying out—'Help! help! help!'

"I heard a loud crash, like the bursting of a partition wall: then Regina's shrieks reached me again, as clear and loud as they had before been shrouded and dim.

"Afterwards there was a pause for a moment; then the muttered tread of a violent struggle.

"The noise came nearer to me, as if the struggle were continued in the room behind the door of which I was ensconced.

"In spite of my feverish curiosity and anxious suspense, I was about to hastily withdraw, when I caught sight of a small flight of steps which apparently led up to a loft running over the adjoining room. I ran up, and found myself in a garret, lighted by a dormer-window. By putting my ear to the floor, I heard very distinctly the noise of the continued struggle, and the following exclamations:—

"'Sir!' said Count Duriveau, in a hoarse, panting voice; 'one man of spirit should not strike another.'

"'Scoundrel! do *you* call yourself a man of spirit?' answered Captain Just, who seemed unable to control himself.

"'Sir!' said the count, stammering with rage; 'this is fighting like common porters.'

"The noise lasted scarcely another minute; then I overheard the captain saying to Regina:

"'Excuse me, madam, for having chastised this man in your presence; but I could not conquer my indignation. Now, madam

"'Oh!' muttered the count,—then let go by the captain; 'this shall be a mortal duel between us. Do you hear?—a mortal duel!'

"'My God! she is fainting!' cried the captain. 'Madam! exert yourself, madam!'

"Then, astounded and indignant at Count Duriveau's audacity in remaining there, the captain exclaimed,—

"'You see that your odious presence is killing!—Villain! must I hurl you headlong down the stairs?'

"'Attend to this dear princess,' answered Count Duriveau, with taunting rage,—'why do n't you cut open her laces? it 's a fine opportunity.'

"'Nothing—nothing—no help! She faints! The

woman and her child have fled,' said Just, supporting Regina in his arms. 'My God! what is to be done?'

"'Five minutes later, and I should have been revenged!' cried the count, with indomitable boldness. 'Well, I must begin anew.—I should be jealous of you, if I was not going to kill you presently, my fine knight-errant captain; for we shall fight presently,—do you hear?—with pistols. I shall have the first shot—it's my right—and I will hit you in the heart. The Marquis of Saint Hilaire shall sup with you to-night—among the dead!'

"'God be praised! she recovers,' exclaimed Just. 'Madam, fear nothing—I am here. Cheer up,—come along.

"'Mind you,' continued Duriveau, insultingly; 'do n't go and report, my dear princess, that you were lured into a trap; nobody would believe you. I have foreseen every chance. The world will believe, and give out, that you came here voluntarily; that it was not the first visit; and that this burly captain was drawn hither by jealous fury. He won't deny my story, for I mean to kill him presently. Thus I shall have the good and you the bad part to play, dearest princess.'

"'Lean on me, madam,' said Captain Just to Regina, no doubt by that time recovered from her faintness.

'The sound of several slow steps then announced that Regina was leaving the chamber, reclining on the arm of her deliverer.

"'To our next meeting, dear princess,' shouted the taunting and insolent voice of Duriveau. Then he added, with bitter hatred: 'In three hours I shall be at your door with my seconds, Mr. Just Clement. Expect me, therefore!'

"The captain, without heeding this last provocation, led the princess down stairs into the street.

"Soon I heard Count Duriveau's sullen strides in the chamber. Then, giving loose to his rage, hitherto suppressed, he cried out,—

"'A blow on the cheek,—kicked and vilified before that haughty woman. Oh! I will kill him. Hell rages in my soul! But for him, I was revenged! Through pride, she would have died rather than say any thing; and perhaps she might have returned another time, through intimidation. Oh, that man—that man! And to have to wait three long hours!'

"Count Duriveau withdrew, saying,—

"'Lallemand has fled—she was right. But her I can trust.'

"When I considered the count was gone, I left my hiding-place. I would not leave the house without examining the theatre of the conflict.

"The tattered partition no longer concealed the entrance to two inner rooms adjoining that of the mock invalid. These rooms were covered with carpets, and furnished with a degree of luxury.

"When I reflected that a second time, from the depths of my obscure degree, I had just rendered Regina a signal service, I felt for a moment the deepest joy. Then when I thought of the danger that Captain Just was about to expose himself to, I felt a cruel remorse,—my conduct seemed that of a coward.

"And yet, who could I have applied to, during the prince's absence? To expose my own life to the peril instead of Captain Just's had been nothing,—I would gladly have done it: but my condition as a servant forbad any such knightly action. My fears of the consequence of the unhappy duel, in which the son of my benefactor was engaged, poisoned therefore the only joy I was permitted to taste.

"On leaving the house, I did not see Jerome's hackney-coach, which had most probably driven home the princess. My wound, which I had forgotten during that moving scene, was very painful, I was impatient to return to the hotel of Montbar, to attend to my duty; I was unwilling to incur the reproaches of my mistress; and it would have puzzled me to explain the cause of my absence during the morning.

"After a quarter of an hour's walking, I met with a hackney-coach, and got inside; this enabled me to reach the hotel of Montbar about noon.

"The first thing I did was to go up to my chamber, to change my dress all stained with blood: I met Julietta on the staircase; who cried out as soon as she saw me:

"'Why, Mr. Martin, what has kept you so long? since madam came in, she has asked for you a dozen times at least. You ought to have told me: I would have done your part of the duty this morning.'

"'I am very sorry for my delay, Miss Julietta,' said I; 'but, see, this is my excuse.'

"'God bless us! blood upon your trousers, and a handkerchief round your leg.'

"'The streets are so slippery:—I was running,—I stumbled over a heap of rubbish, and fell down on some pieces of broken bottles.'

"'Poor fellow!—Do you feel much pain?'

"'Not much at present; but just after my accident I suffered so much that I could not walk for the pain. It won't be any thing, I hope: I am hastening up to change, and will be down to my mistress directly.'

"Ten minutes later I entered the waiting-room, where I was accustomed to stand, when I heard the bell violently rung.

"I ran into the parlour, and raised up the cloth portal.—I saw Regina frightfully pale, with her features disordered, but calm and collected withal.

"'This is the tenth time I have rung to summon you,' said she harshly: 'you ought to have been here since eight o'clock, and it is now nearly half-past twelve;—really, it is hardly credible. You began your service in a most extraordinary manner.

"'Will your highness be pleased to excuse me for once; for——'

"'Such neglect is unaccountable: I expected very different behaviour—and precisely at a time I so greatly needed. But never mind, I will ring for you when I want you.'

"I withdrew, deeply mortified by the princess's harshness; but I reflected soon after that she knew nothing of the cause of my unaccountable absence.

"Ten minutes had hardly elapsed before the bell rang again.

"'Miss Julietta,' said the princess, 'has just informed me that you have cut yourself severely; and that that accident was the occasion of your apparent inattention. Why did you not say so at once?'

"'Princess——'

"'Truly,' resumed Regina, kindly, 'I did not give you time. Do you feel much pain?'

"'A little, princess.'

"'Are you well enough to go out and deliver a few messages, in a coach?'

"'Certainly, princess.'

"Here, as Regina, whose acute suffering was manifest, hesitated to proceed, I said to her—

"'I have yet to inform the princess that I saw the Baron de Noirlieu this morning.'

"'You have *seen* my father?' cried she, surprised: 'you have really seen him?'

"'Yes, princess.'

"Then I related to her my interview with the baron and Melchior.

"Although Regina concealed the feelings she was a prey to, she did not hear unmoved with what interest her father had inquired about her: a tear of happiness shone in her fine eye; her face expanded a moment,—then, the clock suddenly struck one; the princess shuddered as she heard it, and her face was once more overcast and anxious. She eagerly exclaimed—

"'One o'clock,—my God! already.'

"She was thinking of the duel of Captain Just.

"Then in a short stifled voice, she said to me, and with some confusion, leaning on each word as she uttered it rapidly—

"'Doctor Clement placed you with me:—I revered him as a father.

"Then the unhappy woman did all she could to

appear calm and unruffled, and strove to dissemble the alteration in her voice.

"'Princess, you know how grateful I feel towards Doctor Clement,' returned I.

"'And it is on that account,' resumed she, eagerly seizing on the observation, 'that I will trust to your fidelity and discretion in a case relating to Captain Just. This morning,' said she, 'I learnt, by chance, at a friend's house, that in consequence of some quarrel, M. Just Clement was going to fight a duel.'

"'He, madam!—Oh! my God!' cried I, feigning surprise and alarm.

"'This duel,' continued she, is to take place, I am told, to-day. M. Just Clement is the son of a man who always showed me a fatherly affection: I am so uneasy, that I wished to know whether there was any truth in the report.'

"I took pity on Regina;—her strength was exhausted; she was obliged to lean against the chimney-piece.

"'Nothing so easy, princess,' replied I; 'I will call upon Captain Just,—he is still living at the doctor's old house,—I will speak to Susan, who brought him up, and through her I shall certainly learn something.'

"'That 's it,' said the princess, eagerly; 'and if, by chance—which I cannot believe—that unfortunate duel should take place—to-day—presently——' (Regina's lips quivered as she spoke)——'You would not return here——'

"'Until I could inform you, princess, that M. Just is not wounded; for, thank God, I often heard the late doctor say that his son was one of the best swordsmen in his regiment.'

"Really?' exclaimed Regina, with a glow of radiant hope.

"Then she hastened to say—

"'But make haste,—the time flies;—take a coach, and set out.'

"Half-an-hour afterwards I was with the captain.

"I afterwards learned what passed prior to the duel; and these preliminary measures proved at once the captain's energy and coolness,—his solicitous foresight as to Regina's peace of mind, and his perfect knowledge of Count Duriveau's character.

"Before he returned home, Just had called on two of his former comrades at the Polytechnic school. Provided with these witnesses, and expecting a visit from Count Duriveau, he likewise waited on a lawyer—a very eminent civilian; and after explaining his case to them, took them all three home with him.

"At two o'clock, a carriage stopped at the doctor's door. Two gentlemen alighted, and asked for Captain Clement.

"Susan ushered them in.

"These two gentlemen, the friends of Count Duriveau, found Captain Just with the two officers and the lawyer. They all bowed to each other with the utmost courtesy; and one of Count Duriveau's friends said to the Captain—

"'My friend, Count Duriveau, has been insulted by you, sir, in the most serious manner: he demands satisfaction:—being the offended party, he has made choice of pistols. We will settle with these gentlemen, who are probably your seconds, the other terms of the meeting.'

"'Sir,' returned the captain, 'have the goodness to answer one simple question. Do you know the cause of the provocation which Count Duriveau does me the honour to address to me?'

"'Perfectly well, sir. Count Duriveau has told us that it was an unfortunate collision, the consequence of a rivalry in the attentions both of you were paying to the same lady. Count Duriveau had the delicacy to conceal the name of the lady,—the cause of this lamentable quarrel,—reserving that communication till after the issue of the duel.'

"'That 's just what I expected,' said the captain, glancing at his friends. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'Count Duriveau is at the door, I believe?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Will you have the kindness to request him to step up?'

"'But sir—such an interview——'

"'It is not I who shall have the honour to confer with Count Durivean,' answered the captain.

"'Who then, sir?'

"'This gentleman,' said the captain, showing the civilian.

"'Is he one of your seconds?'

"'He is my friend.'

"'Then, sir,' said Count Duriveau's witness, 'I cannot see the use——'

"'Sir,' resumed Captain Just, 'I declare that I instantly withdraw, and refuse Count Duriveau any and every satisfaction, unless he first consents to the interview I wish him to have with this gentleman.'

"'But, sir——'

"'But, sir,' continued Captain Just, with great spirit, have the goodness at least to consult with the count as to the condition I annex.'

"'Quite fair, sir,' said the seconds.

"They went out; and five minutes after they returned with Count Durivean.

"'Does he consent?' asked the captain.

"'He consents,' replied one of the seconds.

"'Gentlemen, please to step this way,' said the captain to the count's seconds and his own.

"Count Duriveau was left alone with the lawyer.

"The civilian was a short man, with a sedate derisive look; he wore blue spectacles, and carried under his arm a bulky volume with speckled edges. He made a courteous a sign to Count Duriveau to be seated.

"'To whom have I the honour to be speaking?' inquired the latter.

"'To Monsieur Dupont, barrister-at-law.'

"'Monsieur Dupont, barrister-at-law?' said Duriveau haughtily: 'what does this mean?—what need of a lawyer?'

"'That he may do his little office, sir.'

"'His little office? Why, this is a joke.'

"'Sir, are you acquainted with the Art. 322 in the Criminal Code?'

"'How mean you, sir?' cried the count, eyeing the lawyer with increasing astonishment.

"'This is the Article,' resumed the lawyer, reading.—

"'Whoever shall have committed an offence against chastity, whether consummated or attempted, shall be punished by seclusion.'

"'Sir?' exclaimed Duriveau.

"'Do you not know what is meant by seclusion?' continued the lawyer.

"'But to the purpose——'

"'This is the meaning,' said the lawyer, interrupting Duriveau. Any person condemned to seclusion shall be confined in a *House of Correction*, and employed at hard labour; the profits of which may in part be devoted to his own use.

"Then looking derisively at the count, who was very pale, the lawyer proceeded—

"'You appear to me to have all the requisite virtue to set yourself to make list shoes during your leisure hours at Melien, Poessy, or elsewhere.'

"Count Duriveau was stunned, and had not a word to say in his defence.

"The lawyer continued with immoveable sedateness—

"'You laid a horrid snare to ruin a lady of the highest honour, you wanted to commit an infamous outrage upon her.'

"'Sir!' cried the count, white with fury,—'beware!'

"'Hush—not so loud; be calm, or I shall raise my

voice,' said the lawyer, 'and tell your seconds what you most prudently concealed from them,— that is, the infamous conduct which alone produced the attack upon you made by the captain.

"At this threat Duriveau was again silent with confusion.

"The lawyer continued—

"'The crime you have been guilty of renders you liable to the punishment I have detailed. I can presently draw up an account of this shameful deed and send it to the recorder.'

"'A crime! the recorder! Nonsense, sir.—you take me for a child. Every man of the world has several times in his life made an attempt on the chastity of the woman he was courting. Mr. Lawyer, do n't you know these matters in court?'

"'The attorney-general *is not obliged to know* those attempts against chastity of which no complaints are preferred,—but he immediately issues a warrant against a ruffian who lures a virtuous woman into a den, in order to commit an act of criminal violence upon her. Such crime being proved, the culprit is condemned to a disgraceful punishment. This perplexes you rather; you did not consider the matter in this light. I wonder at it—and yet you felt you had committed so cowardly and base an action, that you were afraid to explain the cause of the duel to your own seconds——'

"'Captain Just won't fight, and he seeks to cloak his cowardice in these excuses,—is that it?' said Duriveau, bitterly.

"'Captain Just ought, in my opinion, to refuse to measure his honest sword as a soldier with a man whom to-morrow he might send to the sessions. But Captain Just, for private reasons of his own, does condescend to fight, on certain conditions.'

"'What are they?' said the count, clenching his teeth.

"'First of all, he will fight with swords instead of pistols.'

"'No, I shan't renounce my right to fight with pistols.'

"'You refuse?'

"'I do.'

"'Good,' said the lawyer, rising, 'I shall now go and explain to your seconds the cause of the duel; and this very night a charge shall be lodged against you in the attorney-general's hands.'

"'Well, let it be with swords, then!' exclaimed Duriveau, exasperated.

"'In the next place,' said the lawyer, 'you must secure the lady against any slanderous aspersions. You must therefore say to your seconds, in the presence of those of Captain Just, something of this kind:—I asserted, gentlemen, that the cause of the duel was a jealous rivalry in love,—that is not true: and then you must add:—I swear on my honour, that the true cause was a dispute on a political subject.'

"'Never, never! will I retract my word,' cried Duriveau, in a paroxysm of fury;—'I will strike Captain Just before his witnesses, and then he must fight.'

"'Do n't try that game,' said the lawyer, tittering; 'you must have perceived this morning that Captain Just has a strong arm. Now, if you had the misfortune to raise your hand to him, he would most assuredly pummel you with blows a second time, and to-morrow the charge would be lodged.'

"'I consent to every thing,' cried the count, borne down by his position—'but only let us fight.'

"'Your desire shall be gratified directly. Captain Just has thought that, owing to the difficulty of finding a suitable place to cut one anothers throats in a quiet manner, the garden behind his house—you can see it from here—would exactly answer the purpose. As for the weapons, our seconds have brought two pair of fighting swords.'

"'Enough sir,' said Count Duriveau, resuming his composure. 'I accept every thing—I consent to every thing, provided you place a sword in my hand—and set that man before me.'

* * * * *

* * * * *

"Count Duriveau retracted his first assertion as to the cause of the duel, pledged his word of honour that there was no rivalry in the case, and that the grounds of the quarrel consisted in a political argument.

"The meeting took place in the garden of the doctor's house, and a desperate fight ensued.

"Count Duriveau displayed the greatest bravery; although wounded by a thrust in the thigh, he would not give in; and after running his sword through the arm of Captain Just, he received a thrust a second time in the right side, and disabled from fighting any longer.

"Half-an-hour after the termination of the duel, I returned to tell Regina that Captain Just had escaped with a slight wound.

"The unhappy woman's spirit had supported her till that moment. But her knees soon after sank beneath her; I had only time enough to summon Julietta to her help, and then left them together."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL.

"I FIND, among my papers, the fragments of a journal written from time to time, during my abode at the Hotel of Montbar.

"These lines, unconnectedly written, from day to day, give nevertheless a faithful account of my most poignant sufferings, in the strange situation in which I then was.

"This journal containing within a few pages the main particulars of my first year's service, gradually leads to great domestic events in the family of Montbar, and occurred about fourteen months after my arrival.

"Here follows extracts from that journal:

"7th of February, 18—.

"It is now a month since Captain Just was seriously wounded; he has not yet been able to stir abroad. I have been to-day, as usual, to make inquiries about him.

"What a look of gratitude Regina aimed at me the day after the duel, when I said to her:

"'Madam, will you permit me to ask a favour of you?'

"'Speak, Martin.

"'You know, madam, all I owe to Doctor Clement; I feel a respectful attachment to Captain Just, and although his wound is far from being dangerous, I should be very uneasy if I did not hear almost every day how he fared. I wish therefore to beg permission to go every morning to inquire.'

"'This feeling of gratitude is too laudable for me not to encourage it,' answered the princess, dissembling her joy.—'I think it very proper you should go every day to inquire about your protector's son.'

"Poor woman! how happy my request must have made her, if she loves him already.

"Never would she have dared to give me the order to go there every morning.

"And now I give her those grateful tidings day by day, without letting her ask them of me.

"Directly after his return from his hunting-party, the prince, although he of course knew nothing of the origin of the duel, went in person to ask after Captain Just, and he is seldom more than four or five days without inscribing his name in the list of visitors.

"8th of February.

"Oh! how sensibly touched Regina has been

by my delicate forethought. How grateful she feels for the zealous and intelligent devotedness I have shown to save her reserve and spare her pride in whatever relates to Captain Just! How nobly has she rewarded me!

"This morning I brought her my household book of expenses; the outlay amounted to 125 francs. My mistress presented me with four double-louis, saying:

"'The surplus is for yourself, Martin.

"She gives me *money*,—and her obligations are discharged.

"This evening, at dinner, the prince was peevish and morose towards his wife. How strange! On his return from the country he had appeared, and I am certain he was, sincerely affected on hearing of Captain Just's wound. His first impulse had been frank and generous; but as the captain grew better, the prince railed against those persons who quarrel and fight about politics, observing, reasonably enough, it must be granted, that to cut a man's throat was not exactly the best proof one could give of the soundness of an opinion.

"These taunts, manifestly aimed at Captain Just, must have been doubly cutting to her, as she had been the cause of that meeting in which Captain Just had so bravely perilled his life on her account.

"When a man recovers from a sword thrust, he always looks interesting," said the prince, tittering: "he has his arm in a scarf, his face is still pale, and after a little pressing, he relates the furious cuts that had been given and received, and then the women tremble as they listen to the narrative."

"Regina was evidently afflicted at these cruel taunts, but she could not reply to them save by her affected coldness and indifference.

"At length, driven beyond patience, she left the dining-room on pretence of a headache; the prince continued at table. I had been so taken up with Regina's painful situation, that on the prince asking me for a spoon, I forgot to present it to him, according to custom, on a plate, and was guilty of the enormity of offering him the spoon *with my hand*.

"Instead of taking it, the prince, scanning me from head to foot with a look of derision, said to me:

"'Was it at Doctor Clement's you learned to wait at table?'

"The prince's own valet, poor old Louis, came to my help; he drew near, and whispered to me in a most doleful voice:

"'On a plate, my lad—on a plate!'

"'Excuse me, prince,' said I to my master, wishing to atone for my mistake, but he turned to his valet, and said:

"'Louis, give me a spoon.'

"Which the worthy old servant complied with, glancing compassionately at me.

"I was alarmed—not on account of the prince's haughtiness and severity; the prince, whom I had seen emerge out of a horrid den, where he had spent the night in getting drunk, could not humble me—but I was still his valet, and he might dismiss me.

"10th of February.

"What a morning this was;—I thought I should have gone mad!

"It is eleven at night. I have just come in;—I cannot remember the streets I have been through. This mad excursion has exhausted me.

"Let me remember, if I dare.

"I got up early, and went to the Baron de Noirlieu's. 'My master is just as he was,' answered Melchior. I returned home to arrange my mistress's room.

"This duty, generally so tedious and indifferent to servants, is to me fraught with attraction, and the source of many enjoyments. To dust and set in order those elegant nicnacs, those sumptuous moveables that my mistress lives in the midst of; to polish that mirror which so often reflects her charms; to prevent the colour from tarnishing on those pictures she loves to contemplate; to restore the brilliant lustre of those pieces of china with its gold and variegated colours, those splendid vases which she fills with flowers out of her fair hand; and then those countless curious pieces of art, those masterpieces of carving, of sculpture, those statuettes, relics, basso-relievos in silver, in ivory—with what pleasure, with what love I handle these things after my mistress, who will touch them again.

"How often have I said to myself:

"'Would not the most ardent, the fondest lover envy my lot! To live in the same sanctuary with the adored object, to be where she is, to breathe the same air, to see what she sees, to touch what she has touched, to pick up her handkerchief, her gloves, her bouquet, to give her the book she wants, to pour out the water she puts her lips to, to offer her the crystal bowl in which she plunges her rosy fingers, to keep the sun from molesting her with his rays by letting down a blind, to kindle the fire that warms her, to put a cushion under her pretty delicate feet, or a satin mantle over her white shoulders; finally, with watchful eye to anticipate her slightest wishes, to study to save her even the trouble of asking; to obey her commands; in a word—to *serve* her.'

"Yes, great is the happiness, but terrible are the consequences of this domestic intimacy. I have had a fearful proof of it to-day.

"It was the day for changing her flowers, one of my favourite days. She is so fond of fresh flowers! and often, too, she will trust to nobody but herself to arrange them; then I assist her in her task.

"I therefore laid out on the carpet, and ready to be placed in the fairy garden and in the different vases, a large number of flower-pots.

"Nothing further remained to be done in the parlour, save to dust the elbow-chair in which my mistress usually sat, half-lolling back.

"The soft sinking seat had almost retained the impress of Regina's charming form; the stuff was slightly burnished there where her head generally lies; every part of it exhales that keen suavity of perfume peculiar to the garments of my mistress.

"I was alone. I put my burning lips to that soft satin whereon her hair, her cheek, her hand, her noble frame had rested. I breathed in with voluptuous passion the perfume emanating from her—I kissed the velvet ottoman on which she lays her little feet.

"This is delirium! but for me these signs of her presence live, breathe, and palpitate; it's her actual hair, her cheek, her hand, her figure, and herself.

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"I went afterwards into the picture-room, communicating on one side with her parlour, and on the other side with her bed-room.

"I was near the door, rubbing an ebony moveable with a piece of serge, when I heard Regina saying to her chambermaid:

"'Miss, shall I get up?—is my bath ready?

"'In a moment, madam,' answered Julietta from the dressing-room. I am going to pour the essence of *vervain* into the water.'

"Her bath!

"'It's ready. Madam, you may get up now,' said Julietta shortly after.

"And I heard the light rustle of the silk blankets thrown back over the bed.

"She was getting up!

"She was entering the bath!

"A moment after, she said to her chambermaid:

"'Pour a little warm water into this bath, it

feels too cold; take care my wrapper is quite warm.'

"'Yes, madam.'

"I was rooted to the spot, a prey to unutterable confusion, listening, so to speak, to what I could not see, or rather fancying in my mind every move that my beautiful mistress was making.

"At these consuming images, the arteries of my temples beat so violently that I could hear their dumb sound amidst the deep silence that reigned in that remote apartment.

"My head was turning giddy—I wanted to fly, but could not; my knees trembled and shook under me. I leaned against a chair—a painful suffusion disturbed my sight. I was for some moments unable to see or to feel.

"The princess's voice raised me up; she was saying to Julietta:

"'I have been long enough in the bath; give me my wrapper.'

"A moment after, Julietta said:

"'Here it is, madam.'

"'Give it me,' answered my mistress.

"Then, almost instantly, she cried out:

"'My hair has come undone; fasten it up. Do n't you see it has fallen down into the water.'

"And then no doubt, half-shaded by her magnificent hair, Regina had, like a nymph of old, risen up in her white conch.

"A quarter of an hour after, I was at the end of the gallery, cleaning the large Venetian mirror, when suddenly that glass, previously shaded, was lighted up, and the following picture was reflected before me, for a moment only:—

"My mistress, with her hair in disorder, her arms and shoulders naked, her snowy bosom barely concealed by the cambric, fringed with lace, and no longer fastened by the two emerald buttons, appeared in that mirror as she sat on a low chair, half bending down, and pulling over her well-rounded and shapely leg her pearl-grey stocking, and fastening it above the knee with her garter, &c.*

"I heard the sound of a door shut to, and the voluptuous vision vanished.

"I thought myself under the overpowering influence of a dream:—a slight familiar tap, struck on my shoulder, made me start, and turn about. It was Julietta.

"'I hope, my dear Martin,' said she to me, laughing, 'that you are very attentive to what you are doing. I have just left madam's apartment, and you did not even hear me coming.'

"'I was cleaning—this glass,' answered I, stammering.

"'I know it; nothing ever disturbs you from your work; you are very fortunate—you.—But tell me, are madam's flowers arrived?'

"'They are in the parlour, miss,' said I, recovering my composure.

"'Good,' said Julietta; 'I will tell madam so. She bids you wait to arrange the flowers; you know it is often her habit.'

"'Very good, Miss. I will wait for madam.'

"'It won't be long; I have only to dress her hair, for I shall not lace her stays till after breakfast.'

"Julietta then tripped away.

"When she opened the chamber door, the venetian mirror was once more lighted up, and again, in spite of myself, my eyes fell upon it—but I saw nothing but the chair close by the hearth.

"Soon after, Regina came into the parlour.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

"My mistress was doubtless in a happy mood, and tickled by some agreeable idea, for her charming features were gently expanded; she looked down upon the heap of flowers amidst which she was advancing, and contemplated them with slow and lingering ecstasy, exclaiming:

"'Heavens! what fine camelias, what beautiful primroses, what splendid roses! How fresh and luxuriant they seem!'

"I assisted her in arranging the flowers; I had to bring them to her, whilst she put them in the vases, mingling them and consorting their hues and shades with exquisite taste.

"The fancy-garden surrounding her writing-table was almost on a level with the carpet: she had to kneel down whilst accomplishing her task, and I had to stoop over her as I brought her the flowers. I could not help following with confused looks the sloping undulations of her fine shape, whose treasures every moment were revealed as she moved about from one vase to another.

"It so chanced that as I was presenting a magnificent vase of Saxon porcelain to my mistress, one of her delicate small hands swept against mine. The sensation was electrical—my blood rushed back to my heart; and as I drew my hand away, either through respect or fear, I let fall the vase, and broke it on the carpet.

"'Gracious! how awkward you are,' cried she.

"'I humbly ask your pardon, princess. I thought you held it already.

"Then as I stood by, abashed, or rather delighted that my awkwardness had concealed the cause of my trouble, Regina added pettishly:

"'Pick up these fragments, and the mound, that are lying on the carpet.'

* * * * *
* * * * *

"Fortunately for me, the princess, after going according to her custom, about three o'clock, to know if she could see her father, finished the day at Mrs. Wilson's, where she dined.

"The prince, on his part, dined at the club.*

"I left the Hotel De Montbar, hurrying forward like a madman, without minding whither I went, and hunted by the voluptuous and burning visions of that cursed morning.

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* These sensual pictures recur too frequently in this great romancist; and if they are tamely submitted to, it will be a tacit acknowledgment that the great body of the people, whose advocate he undoubtedly is, have a taste for meretricious writing. Now we venture to say, that we think the *people* of France do not like these licentious pictures; we know the people of England do not, and we have consequently curtailed them in the course of this novel. Some reasoners might, and do, assert, that the popular mind is not very nice and particular just now; and they point, to sustain their argument, at the number of exhibitions of naked men and women which are opened every day to the public in London, under the name of TABLEAUX VIVANS, and which our poor, sleepy, jog-trot magistrates, far from putting down, as they ought, as gross offences against public decency, are known to tolerate and almost to sanction under their very noses. But these acute logicians should remember, that the unnatural brutes who frequent those receptacles of vice and depravity are people who can afford to pay shillings to go in, and are not, properly speaking, the *people* of England. We know the *people* very shame at such obscene exhibitions in this great city, and we venture to prophecy on this day, the 24th of February 1847, that if the tolerant magistracy and the equally tolerant press, do do not interfere, as in duty they are bound to do, to protect the morals of British youth from the contamination of such scandalous displays, that the day will come when the industrious classes, or the *people* of England, will demolish them in the frenzy of their indignation, like the too glaring brothels of former days.—*Translator's Note*

* Will it be credited hereafter, that our wise generation, after forming domestic homes to enjoy life rationally as the Creator intended, used to build themselves costly barracks, under the name of CLUBS, where men could live apart from all the sweets of social life.

"Regina, with her hair undone, and standing up in the bath—Regina seated in the chimney-corner.

"The recollection burns me—consumes me.

"Oh! I must die, I must die; or, at least, I must fly from those nameless tortures that I did not suspect to exist.

"No, I will not abide in that fatal house. Count Duriveau's plot is baffled! She needs me no longer! I will fly!—I shall go mad!

"11th February, 18—

"No, I must not fly—it would be too cowardly, too base!

"Regina requires my help—more, perhaps, than ever. She loves, or she soon will love, Captain Just. My devotedness may be serviceable to her yet.

"But what am I to do?—my God! I am a man—I am young. I love her to desperation, and she is ever before me!

"What must I do?

"Remember the austere instructions of Claude Gerard,—the maxims of every manly and generous soul!

"'Duty and self-control!' I will do my duty, then, and remain.

"13th February, 18—

"Yesterday I went to inquire about Captain Just;—he is quite recovered, and went out the day before in a carriage. On my return I said to Regina:

"'Princess, Captain Just is so much better, that he went out yesterday.'

"'Ah! I am glad to hear it,' she replied; 'then I hope to have the pleasure of seeing him shortly.'

"Regina spoke this, not indifferently, but in a tone so reserved as to hide the feelings that were elicited within her by the expectation of so soon seeing Captain Just again.

"'Tell the porter that I shall receive company this morning,' said my mistress, shortly afterwards.

"I was surprised at this order. Regina must be aware that, out of decorum, Captain Just would not call upon her, either the first or second time he went out. In the eyes of the world, ignorant of the origin of the duel, so much precipitancy would have signified too much intimacy; and Regina herself might have deemed it indelicate on his part, to show too much eagerness to come and reap the expression of that gratitude which he merited so well.

"Nevertheless, I was surprised that Regina, not expecting the captain that day, should open her door to casual visitors, whose presence could not be otherwise than intolerable amidst her mental occupations.

"However, I executed her orders, and ushered in successively, the Baron de Erfeuil, whom the prince thought as handsome as he was stupid; Count de Hervilliers, a kind of colossus, with a voice like a trumpet, who loved to be coaxed to sing tender ditties; and last of all, the paunchy Dumolard, the huge, bulky brother of Mrs. Wilson.

"The princess rang for me to bring some wood into the parlour, shortly after the arrival of the last visitor. I was astonished to find the conversation very lively, and to notice Regina, with glowing cheek, talking with considerable animation on a most vacant topic, as far as I could judge.

"Apprehensive of solitude, her wish must have been to kill time until the following day, when she expected to have an interview with Captain Just. I was not mistaken: in ten minutes' time I was recalled by the bell. As I was about to open the door, I heard the handsome De Erfeuil say, mincingly:

"'Really, princess, it is charming of you to accept so graciously this impromptu entertainment and supper.'

"'I accept it,' said the princess, 'but on condition that Mrs. Wilson shall accompany me.'

"And as I entered the room, Dumolard was exclaiming:

"'I answer for my sister, she is quite disengaged this evening. I will go and prepare her; she shall expect you, princess, and I, too, will be your escort. Well, do you still refuse my carriage? I love to lend my carriage; it is my hobby.'

"'You are too kind,' answered the princess, smiling. Then turning to me, she said:

"'Order my carriage for half-past six.'

"As I was closing the door, the handsome De Erfeuil said to the princess:

"'I don't know anything so dull as a melo-drama; but never mind, I like to see every thing.'

"And he smiled a roguish smile.

"'For my part, I like to come in about the middle; that's still more comical,' said the fat Dumolard; 'it's like a riddle, and you try to guess it to the end.'

"How strange, thought I, as I withdrew. Methinks I should have something to say, if I had the honour to be admitted into the company of the Princess of Montbar.

"The princess returned about one in the morning; her countenance was not so dejected as it often is after she returns from a ball; she was pensive, thoughtful, and serious.

* * * * *

"A presentiment had told me yesterday, that Captain Just would come to-day. I was not mistaken.

"This morning, after I had served her some tea, Regina said to me, in the simplest possible manner:

"'You will tell the porter that I am at home for none but M. de Erfeuil, M. Dumolard, or M. de Hervilliers, if they happen to call.'

"I was astounded at this order; but as I was going out, the princess added:

"'I except likewise M. Just Clement, if he chances to call.'

"This explained all.

"Regina is sure that Just will come; and in order to see him alone, she forbids herself to every body except three persons, who, having called yesterday, will certainly not visit her to-day.

"About two o'clock, I heard a plain hackney-coach drive up to the outer door of the hotel, in the street. I went up to one of the windows in the waiting-room, and, partly raising the curtains, I saw the captain crossing the court-yard, after inquiring at the porter's lodge if the princess was at home.

"'Good day, Martin,' said he to me; very warmly as he entered,—'Good day, my lad!—Is the princess at leisure to receive me?"

"'Yes, sir?'

"I ushered him into the parlour, put back one of the curtains of the arras, and announced:

"'Captain Just!'

"Regina was seated. She blushed a little, turned towards Just, extended her hand towards him with eagerness, and said in a tender voice:

"'I am happy to see you again, Mr. Just.'

"Letting down the arras, I moved away, with a broken heart, slowly crossing the saloon, where I might have played the eaves-dropper; but I had no such thought—it would have been too painful.

"I went and sat down sorrowfully near the table where I generally wait, and buried my face in my hands.

"'What are they saying to each other?' thought I, with bitterness.

"Just, with most perfect tact, had avoided the blunder of one arm in a scarf; a little stiffness in the joint, which was betrayed in his manner of holding his hat—such was the only apparent sign of his wound. He never perhaps had seemed handsomer than he was to-day, with that masculine and gentle beauty that is peculiar to him; his short chesnut hair of the same colour as his eyebrows, his large blue eyes, his broad intellectual forehead with its noble scar, his sunburnt complexion, his fair mustachios, his arch and gracious smile, his finely marked chin,—all conspire to impart to his features

a singular character of frankness and energy. Much taller than the prince, his gait, without the soldier's stiffness, is, however, full of that firmness and decision, which the use of the uniform bestows, affording a striking contrast with the laxity, not, however, inelegant, which belongs to the carriage and demeanour of the Prince of Montbar, and the fashionables who visit Regina; the same contrast existed between the splendid and gaudy attire of the prince, and the strict simplicity of Just's attire. This plainness, nevertheless, was not exclusive of elegance: his black riding-coat, buttoned up to the red ribbon he wears, was short, and displayed to advantage his fine shape, which the robust fullness of his shoulders made to look smaller and more elegant; his pantaloons of mourning grey, rounded over a foot, which, like his hand, was remarkably small for a man of his high stature.

"In a word, the prince and he, both young and both handsome, differed as much morally as physically. In the face of M. de Montbar, which was calm and sedate, and a little haughty, in his easy, careless attitude, you divined at once the indolent man of rank, whose life is spent in happy independence, without struggle or care, without any severe duty; whilst the severe attitude of Captain Just, his manly features, already strongly marked by the fatigue and danger of battle, or by deep meditation, proclaimed on the contrary his habits of toil, duty, subordination, and consequently of severe and rigid authority.

* * * * *

"My God! how much I endured during that interview.

"At half-past three they parted.

"I had prepared myself to make the strictest observations, in order to try and discover under what impression Just would be on leaving the princess. I might have spared myself these preparations, for men of the captain's stamp seldom endeavour, or are able to conceal their feelings. When he came out from Regina's apartment his features were disordered: he seemed still to be under the influence of the deepest, the most tender sympathy, nor could he help sighing, as he said to me:

"'Farewell, Martin!'

"He laid so peculiar a stress on the word *adieu*, that I could not help answering him with the sort of familiarity authorised by my former stay in his father's house:

"'But at least not for long, I hope, Mr. Just?'

"He shook his head sorrowfully and replied:

"'For some time, I fear.'

"'How so, Mr. Just?'"

"'I set off to-morrow to join my regiment at Metz.'

"'What, so soon, Mr. Just?'

"'Yes. But tell me, Martin; you know that you may rely on me as you might have depended on my father, whatever situation you may be in; do n't forget that.'

"'I shall always remember your father's goodness and your own, Mr. Just.'

"'Besides, you are quite happy here, I should think?' inquired he.

"'Yes, Mr. Just—quite happy.'

"'I can easily believe it; your master and mistress are excellent people. By the by,' continued he, 'can you tell me whether the Prince of Montbar is at home?'

"'No, Mr. Just. I saw him go out in a carriage.'

"'Well!' said he, taking out with some difficulty a small pocket-book, his wound appearing still painful, 'you will deliver, I beg you, to M. de Montbar, this card, and assure him I much regretted not to have had the honour of taking leave of him.'

"'I shall not forget to do so, Mr. Just,' I replied, taking the card.

"'Well, Martin,' said the Captain kindly, 'farewell, my friend.'

"I went close up to the window, and saw him slowly crossing the court-yard; and, whilst waiting for *the string to be pulled*,* he turned about, and looked towards Regina's window; then the door opened and closed upon him. I am certain the sonorous clash of that gate must have had a painful echo in the princess's heart.

"My first impression on hearing of Just's intended departure, was a selfish, cruel joy. The day was very gloomy; the clock was about to strike four, the hour at which I was accustomed to carry a light to the princess. I hesitated at first, for I felt that she must desire to be alone; that the dwindling twilight must be well suited with her melancholy thoughts. I was certain that at that moment my presence would appear to her as importunate as the sudden intrusion of the light; but giving way to an evil curiosity, which I strove to disguise from myself, attributing what I was going to do to the interest and concern I felt for Regina, I went and took the white porcelain lamp that I was accustomed to take into her apartment at that hour. I opened with unusual caution the door of the outer saloon, the noise of which would otherwise certainly have attracted her notice, and as my footsteps died away inaudibly on that soft carpet, I had already lifted up the arras before Regina was aware of my approach.

"When the glittering light flashed suddenly into her parlour, I beheld the beautiful Regina lying back in her arm-chair, and her face all bedewed with tears. But instantly she turned abruptly towards the fire-side, in order, no doubt, to conceal her tears, and she said to me peevishly and with much angry bitterness:

"'This light is intolerable—did I ring the bell?'

"'No, madam, but it is the usual hour for me to bring the lamp——"

"'Enough—take it back again. You can bring it in when I call for it.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

"6th of March 18—.

"I HAVE just returned from that short voyage undertaken, as usual by Regina, to visit her mother's grave on the anniversary of her decease.

"Julietta and I accompanied the princess. The carriage passed by the stone cross where formerly I picked up Basquine's bloody shawl, after our separation.

"How acute were my sensations, on returning into the village in which my early youth was spent beneath the humble roof of Claude Gerard! How many recollections were conjured up when I saw that poor lonely churchyard, where, for the first time I beheld Regina a child!

"What a strange destiny is mine! To return there along with herself after so many years!

"The lazy weeds had grown over the tomb-stone; the wind had blown down the little shed I had erected there to shelter Regina from the inclemency of the weather whilst she was praying. She appeared greviously afflicted at so many signs of neglect, and both surprised and irritated to see her desires so badly fulfilled since three years; whilst formerly, said she, her mother's grave had constantly been tended with pious care, and provided with flowers and shrubs.

"Alas! Regina must never know that in those days, it was I that had undertaken with love that pious duty.

"She sent me to the vicar to convey her complaints, for she had taken on herself every care relative to the maintenance of her mother's grave. The old malignant enemy of the schoolmaster did not recognise me; he made a lame excuse, alleging this singular reason for his inattention—

"That he no longer had, as in former times, *a schoolmaster at his command* to attend to the cemetery, a school of *brethren* having taken the place of the parish school for the last eighteen months.

"The priest had gained his object—the country schoolmaster, the man who belonged to France, had been expelled, and the dark and evil instruments of Rome had seized upon the right of educating that poor parish.

"Regina had ordered me to double, to multiply fourfold the sum she annually allowed, on condition that the grave should henceforth be tended with the strictest care; the curate was conscientious: he accepted twice the usual allowance, and made the finest promises. They will prove vain—for no mercinary hand will ever perform what I did for so many years.

"We are returned home. Two letters from Captain Just were waiting for the princess; they keep up a permanent correspondence with each other.

20th of April.

"Heaven be praised! I believe I am on the way to restore the fame of Regina's mother.

"Those letters stolen from the grave I have at length been able to read, at least in part, thanks to my lonely and persevering study of the German, which I have resumed with eagerness since my entrance into her service. I can guess—I can foresee a portion of the truth, still partly veiled in mystery.

"Unless I am deceived, how heroic, how sublime, must have been the devoted friendship of the courageous mother of Regina.

12th of May.

"The prince's nightly rambles are becoming more and more frequent. After many whole nights spent in watching at the window of an empty room, whence I could see the path leading to the private door in the garden, I have twice seen the prince return, with a cloak about him. The good old Louis was supporting his master.

"For the last two months the prince's health has declined, perhaps in consequence of these degrading excesses; he now dines but seldom with my mistress, pretending frequently to be ill, and taking his meals in his own apartment. He is sullen and taciturn, he is careless of his person—he who used to be so attentive to his toilet.

* The street-gates in Paris are pulled open by the porter, by means of a string or rope within his lodge, which communicates with the gate.

"The correspondence between the princess and Captain Just still goes on. This morning again, I carried a letter from her to the post-office, addressed to him with his regiment.

"I held the letter a long time in my hands, looking at it with a heavy heart and bitter curiosity. Once I was near committing an infamous abuse of trust. Fortunately I did not yield to the temptation.

"Never mind—I know they love each other. Oh! how I have suffered—oh, how I still suffer at the thought!

"Come! cheer up, cheer up, poor doleful heart! The moment when the passion of Regina must unfold itself is approaching; whatever be the issue, the event will decide the princess's future fate. When the crisis shall have come, the most serious in her life probably—I may yet be serviceable to her again. When once her destiny shall be finally determined, my duty will have been done.

10th of June 18—

"This morning I met with an old friend, and was deeply affected by the incident, for it threw me far back into the past.

"I was trudging along the Quai d'Orsay, at that time rather deserted, when a pale, lean man, of singular ugliness, with a stubble unshorn beard, clad in tatters, but of a mild retiring aspect, held out his hand to me, shivering as he did so. Big tears stood in his eyes, and he muttered in a low voice—

"'Pity, sir, pity, and relieve me for charity's sake.'

"Since I have myself known the anguish of the honest and bashful mendicant, obliged to beg his bread, I am never regardless of such requests: I felt in my pocket for a copper, and as I was giving it to the poor man, and considering him more closely, his remarkable ugliness, so ridiculous in its kind, made me start. A thousand thoughts were awakened in my mind, and I exclaimed—

"'*Leonidas Shark!*'

"It was indeed himself. Poor Leonidas! what a delight he felt; he saw a benefactor in me. It was but little that I gave him; still it was enough to get a lodging for a week and to keep him from hunger. I have some clothes which will serve to attire the poor fellow decently; and I will endeavour to interest Madame Astarté in his favour.

"'After having been a *man-fish*, and lived so miserably, my good Martin,' said Leonidas to me, after a long conversation, 'you may judge that I would snap at any situation, however humble, provided it afforded me shelter, clothes, and bread.'

"When I spoke to him of a situation as an *office-servant*, perhaps even as a *bailiff*, the worthy laureat smiled mournfully, as if he doubted so much good fortune, and said to me—

"'Why not *Provost of the University* at once?'

"I went straight to the minister's office. Astarte was not at home; she really must get Leonidas a place.

"17th of June 18—.

"Among the newspapers received at the hotel, the princess usually reads the *Journal des Débats*. Just now, after Regina's departure, I saw the paper in her apartment; there was about half a column wanting, and apparently it had been cut off with the scissors. Surprised at this circumstance, and going out shortly after on some errands, I went into a reading-room, and called for the *Débats*, and this is what I read and copied from the part which had been cut out of Regina's copy:

"'We have much pleasure in giving insertion in our columns to the following notice:

"'Our readers have not forgotten the gallant feat of arms, which in 1831 was so warmly greeted by our army in Africa. A lieutenant of the 1st regiment of artillery, sent with a detachment of twenty-five soldiers into a *marabout*, most intrepidly encountered and resisted, for two days and a night, an attack of three hundred Kabyles; and although wounded by a sabre-cut across the forehead, and a ball in the shoulder, the gallant officer was the last to quit the wall, as he had been the first to climb it. During the contest, six soldiers were killed, and three others sorely wounded. The evening of the second day, the besieged began to feel the want of ammunition and provisions. At night the Arabs lighted their fires and encamped round the *marabout*, expecting to reduce that handful of soldiers by famine. The lieutenant, determined to make a sally and to cut a lane through the Arabs, collected his soldiers, made them swear not to forsake the three wounded men who would have been ruthlessly massacred by the Arabs, and about midnight the sally was made. It was a terrible struggle with the naked sword; but thanks to the darkness of the night, to the prodigious bravery of the artillery-men, of whom five more bestrewed the field, the eleven soldiers and their officer crossed through the enemy's camp, and saved the wounded men they had carried with them. During the night, the lieutenant assisted his men in carrying a poor serjeant, to whom he was much attached. At day-break the little band rallied, expecting to be pursued and surrounded; fortunately they fell in with battalions of infantry, then marching to Oran. The name of the intrepid officer was Just Clement; he had already received the cross on the field of battle for his good conduct, and has been promoted to the rank of captain for this new act of heroism.

"'But Captain Just Clement, the son of the illustrious Doctor Clement, is not only a valiant soldier, he is, likewise, a first-rate scholar. He was elected last year a member of the Academy of Science, in the section of Mathematics; he has, we are informed, recently made a fine discovery, which will henceforth protect the miners from the dangers to which they are exposed. Not satisfied with having so often spilled his blood on the field of glory, of being, young as he is, one of the most distinguished representatives of science, he has recently acquired a new claim to public gratitude, by a discovery which must preserve the lives of thousands of workmen engaged in the most painful toil.'

"I could readily conceive with what joy Regina must have read the foregoing lines so honourable to Just.

"Glancing over another newspaper, the following passage caught my eye, and I copied it likewise:—

"'We have heard from * * * (one of the northern capitals), that on the eighth of the present month, a performance took place at the Theatre Royal, which will long be remembered by those who were so fortunate as to be present on the occasion.

"'The celebrated *Basquine*, that extraordinary lyrical tragedian, who was engaged to perform at our Opera after her return from Italy, has just produced a great sensation in Gluck's *Armida*, which she played before their majesties, the royal family, and the whole court. There has never been witnessed in this country by any artist, native or foreign, an enthusiasm so boundless, so universal.

"'Several times during the performance, the king condescended to leave his box to express his admiration to the great actress; and, after the last song in the second act, our gracious queen, giving way to the strength of her feelings, threw her *bouquet* on the stage. Her Majesty's example was followed by all the ladies of the court, and a heap of flowers rose up around the renowned actress. Not satisfied with having given her so flattering a testimony of her august admiration, our noble queen desired to compliment the enchanting vocalist, and, by a distinction unheard of in the history of our stage, the king condescended to return to the stage and conduct her himself into the royal box. The royal princes and princesses united their expressions of admiration to those of their august parents. Finally, her majesty the queen, deigned to take off

a magnificent necklace, and place it with her own hands round the neck of the great artist, who bent her knee before our gracious sovereign, on receiving so signal a favour from her royal hand.*

"'This affecting scene, witnessed by the whole house, was greeted with unanimous rounds of applause, which the august presence of their majesties could not repress, and which were directed as much to the inimitable artist as to their majesties, who vouchsafed to bestow upon talent and genius, so singular a mark of their royal admiration.

"'It is needless to say that the *élite* of our capital contend for the short and valuable intervals of leisure which the illustrious cantatrice has at her disposal: the *highest ladies*, the *greatest nobles*, have thrown open their drawing-rooms to the *great artist*, who it seems possesses, independent of her genius and dazzling beauty, the best education, the most fascinating manners, peculiarly marked with a mixture of reserve and dignity, which proves not only that the illustrious artist is conscious of what is due to her genius, but that she feels what she owes to the eminent personages who have lavished upon her so many proofs of sympathy and admiration.

* * * * *
* * * *

"Thus Basquine, by dint of toil, perseverance, and self-reliance, had in a few years attained the object she had pursued with so inflexible a purpose, through misery, disgust, and obstacles of every kind.

"My heart leapt with joy,—my eyes filled with tears on reading these lines, which told of the European fame of my early companion,—of the wheelwright's daughter,—the tumbler, the vagrant, the street-singer.

"To start from so low a beginning; great God! and to reach so high an eminence! And alone, unaided, poor child of misfortune:—alone, and with a heart withered, corrupted, and dead before she was yet sixteen.

"At this reflection, my joy was chilled, and my heart was heavy. Alas! in the midst of the intoxication of glory, and of royal attentions, Basquine may not be happy. All that grace, that spirit, that beauty, that genius,—all that renown at present echoing through Europe, were to serve Basquine, she had said, but as terrible weapons to effect her revenge.

* * * * * *

"Now, at all events, I know where Basquine is,—I can write to her.

"As an appendix to this notice of Basquine, was added—

"'Whilst reporting this tribute rendered abroad to a celebrated actress, we are happy to announce to the public a new volume of poems by Monsieur Balthazar Roger, whose muse first celebrated Miss Basquine. We cannot doubt the success of this new work of Balthazar Roger's, whose place is henceforth assigned to him as one of our most distinguished poets.'

"18th June, 18—.

"What does it mean? For upwards of two months the prince has been constantly shut up in his apartment: a man about forty, of a serious mien, visits him every morning,—stays a couple of hours with him, and returns in the afternoon.

"Several boxes filled with books have arrived. The old valet Louis, lately so mournful and pensive, seems to grow more cheerful every day: the prince himself seems calm and thoughtful;—he seldom goes out;—his life appears to be busy, and spent in study: he sometimes visits the princess in the morning, but the same coolness is maintained between them.

"The picture of the Marshal Prince of Montbar, the glorious ancestor of the prince, has been removed to his cabinet. Does he wish to feel its inspiration, as he looks at this image of a great man?

"'What is the prince about, locked up all day?' said I to Louis.

"The old servitor shook his head with significant mystery and delight, saying—

"'He studies!'

"19th of June, 18—.

"God be praised! poor Leonidas is now raised above want. The post of *huissier* (usher) being vacant, and several influential parties having applied for it. Astarté has prevailed over them all, and the kind-hearted girl has sent to inform me that Leonidas is appointed.

"20th of August.

"Another month has elapsed:—the old servitor looks gloomy again:—the man about forty has ceased to come and be closeted with the prince.

"M. de Montbar has resumed his old habits: he returns very late at night: he seldom visits Regina of a morning.

"22nd of August.

"Captain Just is expected home: he is to spend his furlough in Paris.

"Hold up, poor heart!

"23rd of August, 18—.

"This morning I brought in a letter to the princess, with the post-mark from Metz.

"At twelve, when I served her with tea, she said to me—

"'After dinner you will attend to my flowers, and mind they are all renewed by to-morrow morning.'

"I understand—she expects him to-morrow morning.

"24th of August, 18—.

"The prince is gone to visit his estate of Montbar: he set out at 4 a.m. Yesterday he dined out; so that he has taken his departure without bidding her adieu.

"How strange! so abrupt a departure, the day before the captain is expected.

"25th of August, 18—.

"This day Regina and Captain Just have met for the first time after a separation of several months.

"This is what happened to me in the morning:—The weather was beautiful,—a summer's day fit to lift up the most drooping heart; and yet to me the sun seemed dingy, and the sky, so laughingly blue, looked grey. I foresaw a bitter day for me.

"When I entered her apartment at seven this morning, my mistress was up and dressed to go out. I had never seen her look more beautiful.

"'I shall go myself to the florist's and choose my flowers,' she said. 'If they are brought before I return, you will wait my coming to arrange them.'

"'Yes, princess.'

"I went on before to open the door of her apartment leading to the grand staircase. How lively, nimble, and airy she trod the ground, scarcely setting her little foot to each step as she descended.

"Perhaps, thought I, she is hastening to an appointment made by the captain. And then I felt as if an iron hand were crushing my heart; and, to add to my torture, my fancy depicted to me all the frantic delights of that rendezvous.

"I was still a prey to this terrible vision, which exasperated all the passions in my heart—love, hatred, and jealousy,—when I heard the voice of Julietta calling me—

"'Martin, will you do me a great favour?—come and help me to do Madam's bed-room.'

* This scene ought to have been omitted, or at least described less energetically. The reader has not forgotten the *horrors* through which this poor deserted child has passed, nor the vow she has made to be revenged upon the rich.—*Translator's note.*

"'Certainly,' said I.

"And I followed Julietta.

"Never, until then, had I entered my mistress's bed-chamber; and to enter it to-day, my mind so disordered!

* * * * * *

"I assisted Julietta in making the bed. I saw—but why should I describe a sanctuary that I ought never to have visited?—the bed-room—the bed—the night-linen she wore;—she, my mistress,—a lady of exalted rank; and I a poor servant—a man!

"Oh! women, women!—young and beautiful!—whether you be chaste, or attached to your husbands or your lovers,—the chaster, the fonder you are, the more your bed-chambers should be impenetrable to a valet; or else the most timid, like the most impudent, will pollute that holy sanctuary with his looks, his thoughts, and his desires. At such an idea will you not become scarlet with confusion before that man? Oh! you little think what dreadful licenses your neglect of this reserve may produce!

"The recollection of what I had seen in Regina's bed-room had kindled within me so much brooding jealousy, envy, and hatred against the captain, that, for the first time, an hell-born temptation flitted through my brain.

"This infamous thought would, I believe, never have presented itself, had it not been for the fatal arrival of Captain Just on the very day on which the sensuality of my rash passion had been excited to the highest pitch by one of the accidents of domestic servitude; which, however, I always did my best to avoid, as I knew how they affected my reason.

"Captain Just paid his visit at two o'clock, with an air so deeply and radiantly happy, that my suspicions with regard to the rendezvous in the morning, became afflictingly certain in my mind; and yet, I am bound to confess it, I was mistaken: I discovered it afterwards,—Regina was pure!

"'Good day, Martin,' said the captain to me, kindly; 'I am glad to see you.'

"Happiness, thought I, makes a man so cordial.

"'You are very kind, Mr. Just,' returned I, aloud.

"'You look pale, and altered, Martin; have you been ill since my departure?'

"'No, Mr. Just, I am quite well: but, you are aware there are days when we don't look so well as usual.'

"'And you continue to like your place, I hope.'

"'Yes, Mr. Just.'

"'I am glad to hear it. Is the princess at home?'

"'Yes, Mr. Just.'

"*No*, had risen to my tongue; it was very silly—but that man's happiness was too revolting.'"

"He walked quickly towards her. She held out her hand to him; when, seeing me standing near the cloth-door I had lifted up, she looked at me astonished, saying,

"'That will do.'

"The captain turned round to me.

"I felt how absurd was my persisting in stopping there. I withdrew with a heart bursting with rage.

"Suddenly I was called back by the princess.

"'Martin, raise up the cloth-door: it is very warm, and that will let the air in from the saloon.'

"I obeyed with inward spite, for I had intended, whatever might happen, to stay in the saloon and listen near the hanging, so as to certify my doubts. The first sentences of a tête-a-tête after a rendezvous are so full of meaning! But the princess's order made it impossible for me to play the spy, for the waiting-room where I usually sat was separated from the parlour by a very spacious saloon.

"On my table I found two letters for the princess, brought in apparently by the concierge during my absence. I took them up with malicious satisfaction. I shall at least be able, said I, twice to interrupt their pleasant interview.

"I rejoiced beforehand, as I reflected that the hangings being raised, Just and Regina, knowing I might enter at any moment, must feel constrained by this restriction to their soft effusions; but then I reflected that this very restriction had in it the charm of excitement:—then my horrible temptation returned to my fancy. In vain I strove to escape it—it mastered me. Then I analysed it, considered it under every aspect, with the cold decision of a man pondering on suicide. Then, revolting once more against so deadly an idea, I stood up; I walked about, striving to soothe my perturbation. I looked at the timepiece. They had been an hour together! Come, thought I, taking up one of the letters; I will now go and annoy them.

"And without pausing to consider that my pallor, my agitation, might betray me, I entered the saloon abruptly, holding the letter in my hand.

"I thought I heard a sudden and slight stirring, for the parlour-door being opposite the window, I could not, as I crossed the saloon, perceive Just and Regina in the retreating hollow part of the room they were sitting in. When I entered, Regina was in an elbow-chair, and he was sitting beside her in a low chair. My mistress's cheeks were rather flushed—as for him, I only saw his back.

"'What do you want?' said the princess, with subdued impatience.

"'It 's a letter they have brought for Madam.'

"I presented it from hand to hand, being so disconcerted that I had forgotten to put the letter on a salver. Regina took no notice of my omission; but I remarked her almost imperceptible repugnance on taking the letter out of my hand. After which she said to me in a significant voice—'that will do.'

"'There is no answer, princess?'

"'No,' replied she, with pettish impatience, 'that 's enough.'

"Awkward valet, you ought not to have come; but don't come again, doubtless she thought.

"To touch my hand! A lacquey's hand disgusts her, said I to myself, bitterly feeling a humiliation, which, at any other time, would have been indifferent to me.

"Again the infamous temptation returned to haunt my thoughts, and still more ungently.

"How I should be revenged for all I have suffered!

"I recalled to mind the conservation at Julietta's tea party, during which Astarte, alluding to the observations which valets de chambre had the opportunity of making, said that they might sometimes draw striking inferences from the hands being *gloved* on coming in, and *ungloved* on going out. I had remarked that the captain, still dressed in half mourning, had on a pair of grey-coloured gloves; but when I took in the letter, all my attention being fixed upon my mistress, I had not then noticed whether he was *ungloved*.

"A quarter of an hour after my first interruption, I put the second letter on a salver, and went in again.

"'What more now?' said Regina severely.

"'A letter for Madam.'

"'Bring me my letters when I ring the bell,' she added severely and drily, without taking the one I had brought in.

"I left the room stammering out an excuse. Captain Just's hand, equally white as Regina's, was no longer gloved.

"She feels no repugnance at pressing the captain's hands between her own, thought I.

"Indeed, now that I am writing with recovered composure these detestable peculiarities, I am quite at a loss to conceive what dizziness I must have been affected with on that cursed day. I wonder at it; and yet I know it, without daring to confess it to myself. Alas! the fermentation of a culpable, firm—a shameful and long-smothered passion, ag-

gravated by the fatal scene of that morning, was boiling in my blood, and darkened my reason.

"And my mistress knew it not—could not even guess it. A valet to dare to love a young and lovely woman, with whom and close to whom he is constantly living in unavoidable intimacy. Is it possible? Can such creatures have a heart, or senses? When such things love, they love their like only! So reasons the world.

"Captain Just left at a quarter before five. They were nearly three hours together. It does not matter to Regina; the prince is absent.

"She ordered her carriage for eight o'clock, to go to the Champ Elysees, according to her custom. She will no doubt see her lover there. She said to me, after dinner:

"'Be here at eleven o'clock: until then dispose of your evening as you choose—and mind, another time, never bring me my letters until the visitors have left my apartments.'

"This observation was made in a kind of good-humoured playfulness, but it stung me nevertheless. There was something of the idea of Captain Just in it; which, though it may have been her reason for speaking more kindly, went like an arrow into my heart.

"'Yes, princess,' I replied.

"Haunted by the direful temptation, I went out, hoping that the walk, the open air, and fatigue, might soothe my agitated spirit."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

"THE evening was very fine; I went to the Tuileries, and rambled among the large chesnut-trees which surround the oblong garden-bed planted with rose-trees and shrubbery.

"The solitude—the dense umbrage of those fine trees—the perfume of the flowers—the warmth of the air—the sight of several loving pair roaming through that lonely spot: all that surrounded me, conspired to deepen the images I wanted to banish.

"I left the Tuileries, and glided along the quays, and the bank of the Seine, by the *Cours-la-Reine*.

"My fatal thought clung to me. The night had fallen;—it was mild, splendid, starry. Every step I took I saw nothing else but scenes and spectacles of love.

"On the shelve of the river, working men and needle-women were walking to and fro enlivening each other; whilst others were seated on the sward and talking.

"I retreated to the dark walks.

"There, almost every seat was occupied by a couple that I could hardly see but for the white dresses of the women. Smothered sounds of kisses and sighs, low whisperings, haunted me again. Nothing breathed that fatal night but tenderness, pleasure, and voluptuousness.

"I fled from those dangerous scenes, and desirous still to escape those pictures of love which were kindling my blood, I crossed the Place de la Concorde, and went along the Rue Saint Honoré.

The moon was at that time shining in the heavens; the windows of many houses were open, and at more than one dark balcony, the apartment within being lighted, I saw by the moonlight which reflected its beams blandly over them, men and women, leaning on the iron rails, and talking so closely—so very closely—that their hair was mingled as they spoke.

"What more? my God!—those poor unhappy wretches, whom misery rather than vice drives out upon our pavement at night, and the sight of whom is mostly so disgusting to me, came in addition, with their enticements, their lascivious gait, to stir up the fire that was consuming me.

"I went into a shop and bought a bottle of brandy; and provided with this, I returned to the hotel.

"It was half-past ten; I hid the bottle of brandy in a corner of the waiting-room, where I was accustomed to stop, and then expected the return of my mistress.

"At a quarter after eleven she came home.

"When I had opened the door, she said to me:

"'You may retire; I have no further need of your attendance.'

* * * *

"I did indeed retire.

"I put out, according to custom, the parlour lights and those in the waiting room, opening and shutting the door with a slam, as if I had withdrawn; but, instead of going out, I remained in the apartment, closing and double locking the door inside, then, squatting in the dark, I waited for the midnight hour.

"To enumerate the thoughts by which I was tossed and agitated during that hour of stormy expectation, would be impossible. I could as easily count the waves of a torrent.

"The one only fixed and ardent idea, which burning within me with sullen flame rose above all, was this:—

"Regina shall be mine by force and surprise.

"It was an atrocious crime! I know it was—a more infamous deed than that of Count Duriveau. I confess it—for there lay my mistress, peacefully asleep and trusting to my watch—I, whom my benefactor had placed near her as a devoted servant, as a tutelary guardian.

"Yes, it was an infamous crime; but I was drunk, mad, and impelled by the savage appetite of a wild beast.

"And in order that this shameful deed might be more fully horrible, I called in the help of hypocrisy to justify it.

"'None of those whom Regina loves or has loved,' said I to myself, 'has done for her what I have done! And when, confounded and appalled by my criminal design, she shall be at my mercy, broken, powerless, imploring, I will say to her:

"'Ten years have I loved you—hear that; and I have given proofs, though unknown to you. Know it at length.

"'You held sacred your mother's grave—ten years have I tended the spot.

"'You were about to wed and fall victim to a worthless man—I stripped him of his disguise.

"'You were caught in the meshes of a crafty villain—I sent you a deliverer.

"'The restoration of your mother's memory would bring you back your father's heart, and fill your soul with happiness and pride—I have vouchers to redeem her fame.

"'If you are scrupulous to deceive your husband, I can set your conscience at rest, by proving to you that the prince has forsaken you to plunge into the most hideous debauchery.

"'You love your lover. What has he done? He fought in your cause. But I have struggled ten years alone in my abject obscurity. If the man I exposed, to rescue you from him, had not driven a ball through my neck, and blinded me for a year, I had likewise saved you from the prince.

"'Such have I suffered—such have I done for you. But the time is come when the consciousness of my unknown services no longer suffices. Haughty princess, you never could love a servant—I know you could not—for all his services and love. Well, that servant will now possess you, and then kill himself.'*

"Yes, during that cursed night, these were my thoughts.

"*The clock struck twelve.*

* Why not wait to be hanged by the laws of his country?—*Translator's note.*

"Completely to stifle all remorse, I swallowed at a draught a quarter of the bottle of brandy, and went towards Regina's bed-room, with bewildered head, but a firm step, a watchful ear, and vigilant eye.

"The moon threw its luminous beams into the saloon, the parlour, and the picture-gallery.

"They lighted my way to the bed-chamber.

"I bent my head and listened; not a sound was audible.

"If Regina was awake, I was lost; she might snatch up the bell-pull. I was sorry I had not cut it off.

"If, as I opened the door, I should awake her—again I was ruined.

"One moment I faultered in the deed; but the next, hurried on by intoxicating thoughts, and resolved to die, I gave the lock one quick sharp turn.

"My heart's pulsations were suspended. I listened—nothing—not the least sound.

"I opened the door gently.

"The chamber was lighted by an alabaster lamp on the chimney-piece.

"Regina was asleep.

"So deeply did she sleep, that, thanks to the thickness of the carpet, I was able to approach the bed so near as to hear her soft breathings.

"The night was intolerable warm. Regina, her long raven hair unfastened, lay in so voluptuous a disorder as took from me what little reason I had left. Just as I was going to fling myself on my prey, I glanced mechanically about on either side, as though I had feared somebody was there, though I knew I was alone. Thus moving, my eye fell suddenly upon the mirror over the chimney-piece, illuminated by the lamp.

"Within that glass, I beheld a livid countenance, so hideous, so fiercely savage, that in my terror, which my fancy increased, I was petrified, and fascinated by the appalling vision; and then I recovered my senses.

"*That livid face was my own.*

"All I remember since was, that my fierce audacity gave way to a great apprehension of being surprised by Regina: that, almost fainting, I was scarcely able to quit the room, fasten the door anew, and to reach the parlour, where I fell down in a swoon.

"When I recovered, the morning sun, so early at that season, had begun to gild the tops of the trees in the garden, and it must have been three o'clock.

"The deepest silence still reigned in the apartment.

"I returned to my own chamber in safety, flung myself upon my bed, and burst into tears.

* * * *

"It has been a dreadful trial, but a decisive one, too.

"Whatever impurity, whatever guilt, formerly existed in my love for Regina, has disappeared with that fearful night.

"When I served up her tea next morning, Regina said to me:

"'Martin, did you hear any noise last night in the hotel?'

"'No, princess.'

"'It is very strange,' added she; 'I thought I heard, about three o'clock this morning, somebody close the outer door of my apartment leading to the grand staircase.'

"'I did not perceive any thing, princess. This morning I found the door of the ante-chamber locked, as it was last night.'

"'Then I must have been mistaken; besides, you always take the key away with you, don't you?'

"'Yes, princess.'

"'It is most cautious; mind you always do so.'

"'Princess, I shall be careful.'

"30th August.

"Regina is passionately in love with Just, but she is not guilty. I learned the truth to-day. That morning rendezvous I believed in, was a mere fancy of mine. She had taken her florist with her in a coach to visit several celebrated nursery-gardens, and collect flowers.

"How delighted I am to discover my error; nor is there the least jealousy or envy in that happiness.

"'At present, I am convinced of it, the attachment of the princess to her husband is as hopeless as of his to herself. Regina is hurried along the impetuous current of passion—her fate is inevitable. She adores Captain Just—she will elope with him; I am certain of it.

"I will still abide—although Regina is extremely reserved towards me in all that relates to Captain Just. When once she reaches the extremity I foresee, she will need my assistance. I will continue to watch over her till then. The moment my mistress's future lot shall be decided, I will return to Claude Gerard.

"29th September, 18—

"Regina is not guilty yet; she carries her head too loftily to have done wrong.

"The prince is still absent; he has left his estate to make a tour among the Pyrenees.

"The captain only visits the hotel two or three times a week; the other days he and Regina meet in the parks and public gardens.

"5th December, 18—

"For some days past Regina's former serenity of mind appears to have been declining. I have frequently surprised her when she was sad, thoughtful, and deplorably low-spirited; but as soon as she sees Just, her features expand, and are once more resplendent with smiles.

"Thus every thing in this world seems to have a duplex movement, like the earth we walk upon. Regina loves this young officer, and her heart belongs to him, and would prompt her when he is there, to abandon her home, her husband, and society, to devote herself to the object of her passion; but when he disappears, reflection returns, and the stern sense of duty repulses all the fanciful images of the heart.

"The prince, on his return from the Pyrenees, has been to visit the Marquis d'Hervieux at his seat in the country. The early arrival of M. de Montbar, who is expected home by the end of the month, is probably the cause of the princess's mental perplexity. She foresees that the moment of *decision* is at hand. It reminds me of certain words full of significancy. I overheard her speech to Captain Just:—

"'*All, or nothing—altogether, or not at all!*'

"19th December, 18—

"Mrs. Wilson is detained in the country by the serious illness of her daughter; the correspondence between her and my mistress is becoming more frequent every day.

"20th January, 18—

"The prince has been several days in Paris: he treats Regina exactly as he did before his departure, politely, and with the old taunting raillery and cold disregard. He never mentions the name of Captain Just, and avoids all allusion to him.

"Regina's nervous excitement visibly increases; a crisis is impending—great domestic events are coming on.

"I watch more closely than ever. She has not opened her mind to me. I must act as usual, without her connivance, and for her safety and honour.

"2d February 18—

"I am terrified at the power that I now hold in my possession. After the most patient and continu-

ous efforts; after the exercise of incredible sagacity; I have obtained the proofs that I wanted to restore the good fame of Regina's mother, which is now *manifest, palpable, and flagrant.**

"That woman died a martyr to the most admirable devotion. Never was promise or oath more bravely maintained, more solemny adhered to.

"The proofs of her innocence are now lying before me on my table.

"May I be inspired for the best! for the secret I now hold may decide the fate of three persons,—Regina, Just, and the Prince of Montbar.

"I must explain—

"The day before yesterday Regina was more anxious and thoughtful than ever.

"After a short interview with her husband, she wrote during a great part of the day; yet she gave me no letter to deliver.

"Having entered the parlour, to bring in some wood, I saw her fling several bits of crumpled paper into the hearth. On kindling the fire, I contrived to push some of these fragments under the ashes, without her knowledge. When she went out, I hastened back to collect these fragments. I found among them some passages of a letter to Mr. Wilson.

"They are these—

"'——I have just had a full explanation—he knows all——'

"'——Before three days are over, all will be settled. You may imagine how greatly I miss you; how much I need your advice! My head is confused—but you cannot leave your poor sick child to come to me.'

"'——My perplexity is dreadful; to elope with Just, and dedicate my life to him—to withdraw and inhabit some lonely retreat where we could live and die, happy, unknown, and forgotten: that would be heavenly delight. But then my mother's fame is still calumniated, and my error would heap another scandal upon it.'

"'——I love Just—yes I love him tenderly, nobly. I say it with pride, for my love is still spotless. I have loved *three times*—that is often, certainly; *but it is not my fault!* If the first man I loved had been willing, had deserved it, I should never have loved again.'

"'——I loved my husband too, deeply, fondly—but he could not appreciate my love.'

"'——We had been married six months—my happiness had never been greater. My first suspicion was excited by an anonymous letter.'

* * * * *

"'——I said to the prince:—George, you have spent in a single month three nights out of the hotel, each time you left me on pretence of a slight indisposition. An hour afterwards you used to issue out by the private door in the garden, and you did not return before day-break. You see I know all; justify yourself, if you can, George, added I, bursting into tears. I know that appearances are often deceitful; and though I hardly expect you will be able to mitigate this truth, I so long to be re-assured, that I will believe you, George, whatever you may say.'

"'——But to such indulgent words he only replied with bitter haughtiness and disdainful superiority; and what was still worse——'

"'——From that day, wounded in my love, in my dignity, in my reliance on my husband, a wall of ice arose between us, and I sunk into that gloomy despondency from which you rescued me.'

"'——Nothing prevents me but that consideration relating to my mother's fame. I have weighed and considered every thing. A new affection now fills my heart, and I am on the point of sacrificing every thing to it—and yet——'

"These fragments are full of meaning.

"Regina hesitates on account of her mother's fame. I can put an end to that hesitation at once, by sending to Just the proofs of that mother's innocence.

"I too can quiet her remorse as to the prince, by revealing his abject tastes and pursuits.

* * * * *

"I have just overheard a conversation between the Prince of Montbar and his old valet.

"To-morrow night at eight o'clock the prince is going out to another orgie: he has ordered old Louis to carry a clown's costume to No. 3, Rue Dauphine.

"So then to-morrow night I shall be able to let the captain be a spectator, and witness this new and ignominious licence of the prince.

"The responsibility I am about to undertake is, I feel, appalling.

"For me every thing ought to be summed up in these simple words.

"In my soul and conscience am I satisfied, as far as any man can be certain of things, that Regina will be happy with Just.

"3d February, 18—

"What I have just seen has overturned my resolutions and thrown me into a state of dreadful suspense.

"About noon, my mistress gave a large packet contained in a sealed envelope, saying—

"'Take this to M. de Montbar, and wait.'

"I went to the prince's apartment, and not meeting old Louis in the ante-room, I crossed the library; and still not seeing any one, I tapped at the door of the prince's cabinet, then partly open.

"'Come in,' said the prince, and without further reflection I pushed against one of the foldings, but gently and without making any noise.

"I espied the prince's profile; he was setting at a desk, his chin leaning on his hands, and appeared to be looking with deep and sorrowful attention at a magnificent portrait of Regina, painted shortly after their nuptials. Tears recently shed, had left their trace upon his cheek, and he looked so desolate, so sad and pitiful, that in spite of all my misgivings, I was touched. A new idea shot rapidly through my mind: the prince still adored his wife, though his pride contending with his passion, he concealed it.

"I had seen enough, and it was necessary I should not be caught watching my master. So stepping back noiselessly into the library, I tapped again.

"'Why don't you come in, Louis,' cried M. de Montbar.

"'Prince, it is not Louis,' I replied, without showing myself.

"'Who is it then?' said M. de Montbar, rising and opening the door.

"'What do you want?' said he harshly and with vexation.

"'Prince, I have brought you this packet from the princess. She ordered me to wait.'

"I delivered it at the same time.

"'Good,' said he. 'Wait for me in the library.'

"A minute or two after he returned me the large envelope, saying—

* If you have taken so much trouble to vindicate the memory of the mother, who is no more; why in the name of common sense, do you take as much Monsieur Sue to debase two characters who have been described as immaculate through three parts of these Memoirs? All the merit of Captain Just cannot *justify* his undermining the chastity of a married lady, to save whose honour he had ventured his life in the den at Old Market Street. Nor can all the noble theory you put into the mouths of your chief characters, when your better genius is awake, preserve you from the censure of every sound mind when you apply the axe to demolish those principles of the social system which every public instructor is bound to uphold. The laxity of judgment and decency you have displayed in the concluding chapters of this novel will serve as a brand to your reputation as long as your name shall last; and no writer or reader of any judgment at all will be so far deluded by your specious arguments, as not to see *that you have indulged a vitiated taste of your own whilst pretending to depict the manners of your country.*
Translator's note.

"'Take it back to Madame de Montbar.'

* * * * *

* * * * *

"This affecting discovery has overturned all my ideas! But then, this tardy repentant adoration may be only a whim.

"I have but one means left to ascertain the truth; to-morrow I shall see the prince, and speak to him; and I must then discover his real thoughts—after which I will determine between *him* and *Just*.

"4th of February.
"Five o'clock in the morning.

"It's all over.

"After a severe and well-balanced examination of all I saw and heard during last night, I have listened to the dictates of my conscience, and my final resolution is taken.

"Let their fates be fulfilled this day—the fate of Regina, of Just, and of the prince.

"God knows my intentions—he knows whether or not they are pure, upright, and disinterested; he will absolve me, if I have erred.

"This is what took place. Yesterday I said to Regina—

"'I have a favour to ask, princess.'

"'What is it, Martin?'

"'If you could spare me, it would be very kind of you to let me have this evening to myself—and I might return rather late.'

"She replied:

"'Ah! I understand; this is the carnival season. Go—go—divert yourself fully; but mind you don't commit any excesses. You are a good servant, Martin; very quiet and orderly; but one single lapse will sometimes unfortunately pervert the best habits.'

"'Princess, rely upon my discretion.'

"'Well! go.' I went out accordingly.

"I had learned from old Louis that the Prince dined out; so all I had to do was to lie in ambush for him in the Rue du Dauphin, and then to follow him wherever he might go.

"Night having come, I called upon the keeper of a fancy dress shop, in the Rue Saint Honoré, where I purchased a clown's costume with blue and white patches, like the prince's; then I went into a colourman's, and bought some powdered white lead, some vermilion and ivory-black, and, finally, a painting-brush and some siccative oils, by the help of which the colours are dried as fast as they are laid on.

"After this I paid a visit to my worthy friend Jerome, the hackney-coachman, whom I had never forgotten, and to whom I had written the day be-

fore, requesting him to put his coach at my disposal, from six at night until six in the morning.

"A *green* mask, adorned with a long nose, like an elephant's trunk, which I had purchased at the fancy-dress shop, was destined to produce great glee among honest Jerome's children.

"I found nobody at home, except his good and worthy helpmate.

"'Ah! how d' ye do, Mr. Martin,' said she to me: 'you must wait a little for my good man; he had promised to be at home for you after six o'clock; but, during these festive days, you know a coach does not lack customers.'

"'I shan't want him in reality before eight o'clock; so there 's no hurry.'

"'Oh! he won't disappoint you he would rather turn his other customers into the street.'

"'In the meanwhile, my good Madame Jerome, allow me to go and slip on my disguise in this cabinet: and mind, when Jerome returns, don't tell him I am come. I want to try whether he will know me again.'

"'I understand, Mr. Martin, this will be excellent fun. What a capital joke!'

"'By means of a looking-glass and a small rush-light, after shutting myself up in the cabinet, I first put on my clown's costume over my own dress, which was already a wide one, so that both together gave me the appearance of a much stouter man, and consequently a shorter one than I really was: after that, with my red, white, and black paint, and siccative oil, I tattooed my face in such a manner that it would be necessarily impossible to recognise me, and distinguish my features beneath those whimsical daubs and luminous colours; moreover, I had turned my hair up beneath a close cap, and then overlaid it with an enormous wig, most tightly fitted to the scalp—a wig of a grey colour, very long and bushy; and then I crowned the same with my clown's hat.

"Never shall I forget the strange, the unaccountable emotion I felt during those burlesque preparations, so comical and ridiculous in themselves, and yet to which I had resorted with the most sedate reflection, well knowing that this disguise would probably enable me to accomplish a project of the deepest consequence.*

* Apart from the case itself, and without stopping to inquire whether this measure of *sounding* his master before he relieved Regina's suspense, and afforded the prince an opportunity of striving to recall his wife's affections, was really necessary, I think it will be admitted that the genius of this great novelist often shines most brilliantly in comic scenes, and among the most fantastic spectacles of humble life. If he would indulge more in these, and less in his long wire-drawn soliloquies, it would enhance the merit of his works.—*Translator's note.*

END OF THE THIRD PART.

MEMOIRS OF MARTIN.

FOURTH PART.

CHAPTER I.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

"AFTER completing my disguise, I left the little room.

"On seeing me the children screamed out with terror—a good omen. As for Jerome's better half, she was so stupified and amazed that she could only stammer out—

"'Good gracious! Mr. Martin. Oh! Mr. Martin, it's like seeing a hobgoblin! I shall have no sleep to-night; it will give me the nightmare.'

"Jerome came in soon after, saying to his wife,

"'Is Martin come?'

"'Not yet,' said she; adding,

"'I say, Jerome, look there!'

"She turned him about towards me.

"'Oh! the Lord preserve us! Oh! what does that mean!' cried the honest coachman, retreating a step.

"'Good evening, Jerome,' said I, in my natural voice: 'good evening, my hearty, how do you do?'

"'Wait a bit—wait a bit,' said Jerome, coming closer and examining me more attentively. 'Who the dickens can it be?'

"'What, then Jerome, you don't know me—a friend? look at me again.'

"'Egad, I look at you as closely as possible; but devil take me if I can make you out amidst all those black round spots, those white streaks, and those red crosses; it bamboozles me altogether. I see nothing but fire.'

"'Stop: look at me sideways.'

"Sideways or frontways, it's all one; I give it up,' said Jerome, 'and throw my tongue to the dogs.'

"'Indeed?'

"'Positively!'

"'But there 's my voice; don't you recollect that? try once more.

"'What the deuce can the voice signify with such a counterfeit face. If my own wife were thus patched and made up, and said to me, it's I, your wife, I should say, so may be, but I can't tell.

"'Well, 'tis I, Martin—honest Jerome!'

"'You, Martin! don't humbug me!' why you'd make two of Martin, with those fat limbs and that belly, my merry lad; besides he 's taller than you.'

"'I have stuffed myself out under my costume; that 's why I seem fatter and shorter, my worthy.'

"I was now easy in my mind as to the prince: he had seldom spoken to me, and my few answers had always been in monosyllables and in a low deferential voice. It was therefore impossible he should detect my identity with Martin.

"I was afraid at first that my disguise was too perfect, for Jerome thought it was a trick that was put upon him, and would not be convinced of the truth for some time.

"At length I bethought myself of repeating the terms I had used when hiring his coach by letter the day before. This proof was irresistible, and he exclaimed—

"'Bravely done! who could have thought it? Now, then, you shall but dance the *cancan*, the *chicard*, and play your Shrove Tuesday antics, and gad's life! you will fill my gondola with plenty of the laughing damsels that pace the streets.'

"'Fie upon you Jerome,' said his rib.

"'Who can blame him?' returned the coachman. Young people will play their pranks, especially when they are dull at home.'

"'Come, Jerome,' said I, 'time flies.'

"'Forward, then. Wife, good bye; and you, boys, good bye, too,' said the honest fellow, kissing them all. 'To-morrow morning Louise; and

don't forget to have a nice hot onion soup ready: that sets a body up again after a cold February night.'

"When we got out, I said to Jerome:—

"'My worthy friend, I must now make you aware that I have not put on this disguise to have a spree, but to enable me to succeed in a matter both serious and important.'

"'Psha! no gammon, then! What! put on a clown's costume, and dye your face so full of bright colours, to do serious business?'

"'Very serious; and I tell you so, because I may want you at a pinch.'

"'You know you can rely on me. I say, is it any thing like last year's job, when I brought that fine tall young man to Old Market Street with you behind the carriage?'

"'Yes, my game cock, it is something of that sort—and, if possible, still more serious. That's why I depend on you.'

"'All right.'

"Whilst thus chatting, we had reached the bottom of the stairs and the street-door of Jerome's house.

"'Where are we going?' said he.

"'Rue du Dauphin. Stop a few yards from No. 3, and I will remain inside.'

"'Good.'

"'If you see a hackney-coach at the gate of No. 3 or if one should drive up afterwards, you will get down from your box, and whilst sauntering up and down, you will observe if a man, dressed in a clown's costume, issues from the house and enters the coach.'

"'A man dressed like you, Martin?'

"'Yes, like me.'

"'All right;—go on.'

"'Then you will drive behind his coach, stop when it stops, and if the clown descends to go in any where, come and tell me about it.'

"'Agreed. But you must own now, that it is a funny bit of lark, to see a serious business, as you tell me this is, Martin, transacted between two blades dressed like jesters at a fair.'

"'Indeed it is funny, Jerome; but here is another very important point: in case, by-and-by, during the night, you should see me return with this Merry Andrew, take care not to call me Martin. If my name once escapes you, all will be upset.'

"'The devil it will!'

"'Nor is that all. The better to dupe him, should I speak to you, you will answer me—Yes, marquis.'

"'In order that the other blade should take you for a marquis?'

"'Exactly—he must think me any thing but what I am.'

"Before he mounted his box, Jerome said to me seriously, and with some feeling:

"'I say, my good Martin, who would have guessed all this, when on your first arrival at Paris, I drove you about from the Rue du Mont Blanc to the Blind Alley? I mention it to you, because it's an idea just come into my head.'

"Then Jerome sprang up to his seat, and cried to his horses:

"'Now, then, *Lolotte* and *Lolo*.'

"The coach stopped at the entrance of the Rue du Dauphin.

"Folded within my cloak, I leaned out of the coach window, and, as I had expected, I saw a coach standing at the gate of No. 3.

"Jerome got off his box; and after pacing about for some minutes, whistling to himself, he made up to his brother whip, and entered into chat with him.

"Ten minutes later, a gate flew open, and the prince cried out:

"'Hallo, there, coachman.'

"Soon after, Jerome ran up to me, and said:

"'The clown is packed up; I must follow him closely, I suppose?'

"'Do n't lose sight of him for a moment,' cried I.

"'Never fear; my cattle shall tickle their noses against his foot-board.'

"We started off again.

"I was buried in my thoughts, which became more serious and weighty as the time for action drew nigh, when suddenly the coach stopped. It was hardly a quarter of an hour since we had left the Rue du Dauphin.

"'Well! what now?' said I to Jerome, letting down one of the front glasses. 'What's the matter?'

"'The other blade's carriage has stopped opposite a dram-shop,' replied Jerome in a whisper. 'Good—see, there 's the clown getting out. Good again—he is going to take a toothful of comfort.'

"'I understand,' said I, with concern, for I dreaded the effect of such libations.

"'Now, then,' said Jerome, 'he has not been long any how wetting his whistle. The game fellow is no churl at his glass.'

"We wheeled off again.

"Ten minutes later, there was a second stoppage.

"'What more?' inquired I

"'The carriage has stopped before a grocer's shop.'

"'Curses on it,' I exclaimed.

"'It appears that devil of a clown is a thirsty chap,' said Jerome. 'After all, he has a right to do what he likes with his money.'

"Then, the next moment, he added:

"'There he goes again; he must have taken out a patent for his throat to swallow so sprucely. Now, then, horses.'

"We had been twenty minutes longer driving on. I began to be more easy, for I had still apprehended more stoppages. We had reached the Faubourg Saint Martin.—Another pause.

"'What! again?' said I to Jerome.

"'This time the scene changes—it's a wine-seller's. He wants to refresh after the brandy and liqueur, and a bottle of wine will steady him.'

"'Does he seem very drunk?' inquired I of Jerome, with increasing anxiety.

"'Why, no, hardly. Look, he 's coming out; he is bowing to a by-stander most respectfully. Faith, he walks straight enough still; good! he 's got in again. Now, then.'

"Finally, we drove through the Barrier Saint Martin; and ten minutes afterwards, the carriage stood still opposite a door lighted with small lamps, fixed over a transparent cloth, on which were painted the following words in large red letters:

'THIS IS THE
RENDEZVOUS OF THE TITI.
A
GRAND ORNAMENTAL BALL COSTUME.
NO SWELLS ADMITTED.'

"I opened the door, sprang out of the coach, and said to Jerome, pointing to a dark lane on the opposite side of the way;

"'Wait for me in that little lane, my dear Jerome. Do n't quit your box, I implore you; and remember my recommendation.'

"'You may depend upon me, *marquis*,' replied the honest jarvey in an under voice, to show me he had not forgotten it. 'But out away in double quick time—there 's the other clown taking his check of the money-taker.'

"And truly there stood the Prince of Montbar, behind five or six others, at a little wicket guarded by two police officers.

"I took my station behind the prince, and followed him in.

"After crossing a kind of long passage, on each side of which were small *cabinets* for the tipplers, we entered a spacious chamber, lighted by lustres

furnished with a scanty supply of lamps, which almost left in perfect darkness a raised gallery, six or seven feet above the floor, and which stood on either side of this long parallelogram. Within that upper tribunal, tables and stools were scattered about for the Bacchanalians, who from that commanding position were enabled to enjoy a view of the fancy ball.

"I was almost stunned at our first entrance by the infernal clatter of the orchestra, consisting exclusively of brass instruments, calculated to rise above the tumultuous uproar of that multitude, in which five hundred people were speaking, singing, laughing, screaming, howling together, whilst the floor shook beneath the tramp of the delirious disciples of Terpsichore.

"By their forbidding looks and obscene discourse, I soon discovered that the greater number of the visitors belonged to that coarse, idle, and depraved rabble, that always abounds in such ignominious dens.

"Their costumes were mostly dirty, sordid, hideous, and so revoltingly indecent, that nothing but the license of the carnival could have suggested. With difficulty I overcame the dizziness which every novice must suffer amidst that vaporous heat, that stunning noise, that horrid suffocating stench; my face, with its fantastic dyes, provoked great notice and quizzical inquiries, at first in a slang that would defy all interpretation, and then I was forgotten.

"Keeping aloof from the prince, I went further up the room, and then returned so as to cross him and consider him attentively.

"In spite of his repeated libations, he was not drunk; his gait was steady, his features pale, his eyes reddened with excitement, and his smile was scornfully bitter.

"I saw that his countenance betrayed signs of disgust and concentrated anger, when, heaved and rocked from side to side by the tidal current of that shameless mob, he was rudely driven back or apostrophised in the language of the markets.

"He had been there about twenty minutes, when desirous, I dare say, to subdue his untimely scruples, and steep and drown his senses by plunging into the excesses before him, the prince took advantage of a wild and furious galopade, to seize, without ceremony, a hideous shepherdess who was standing disengaged, and who yielded with the best grace to the compulsion, and rushed with his partner into the midst of the frightful turmoil, shrieking and roaring with the loudest of that hair-brained crew.

"I bounded up the steps of the staircase leading to the side galleries.

"Thence I was able to observe and watch the prince. In spite of all his tempestuous extravagance, he showed no signs either of joy or exultation, but seemed rather under the influence of a sullen frenzy. Instead of being flushed by the excitement of that violent exercise, his visage turned more lividly white, and his smile contracted more and more.

"That prince, so endowed by nature and fortune; —that man, the husband of a woman worthy of adoration;—that man, the owner of one of the proudest names in France;—that man, mixing in this manner in the whirlpool of abject wretches, inspired me with the deepest pity.*

"'Now that we have galloped to the death,' said the repulsive shepherdess, after the dance, 'friend clown, you must stand a drop.'

"The prince, whose face was getting darker every moment, threw off the friendly damsel, saying:

"'To the devil with you.'

"'I shan't let you go that way,' said the hideous creature, clinging to his arm. 'Stop till we have drank together.'

"The prince pushed her back so violently, that she stumbled, and began to abuse her late partner in no measured terms.

"After this, she espied among the crowd a *Turk* with a forbidding face, and as big as a giant, and pointed to the prince whilst she spoke to him with much vehemence of gesture. The prince, regardless of this incident, came up into the gallery were I was sitting, and taking a stool at a table adjoining my own, cried out to the waiter:

"'A bottle of brandy.'

"Meanwhile the shepherdess and the Turk continued to whisper something to each other, and gathering about them several others as abject as themselves, kept darting at the prince the most threatening and angry looks.

"The Prince of Montbar leaned with his elbows on the table, and sinking his brow between both hands, sat there in sullen gloomy silence.

CHAPTER II.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

"GOING up to the table at which the prince was seated, I feigned a slight degree of drunkenness, and assumed the coarse language of the frequenters of the place.

"'Well, old cock! is it fair to drink alone?' said I to my master, striking him on the shoulder in a familiar manner.

"M. de Montbar, raising his head suddenly, looked haughtily at me, with an air of angry surprise.

"'Well,—what then?' replied I, staring at him; 'I tell you, old cock, that it hurts me to see a man drinking by himself.'

"'Why, really, you speak the truth,' returned the prince, whose anger gave way to a kind of factitious and bitter mirth; 'it's tedious and dull to drink all alone: besides, were it only for that scarecrow face of yours, you deserve to be treated to a glass or two: call for a tumbler, and tipple away.'

"'That's your sort:—waiter, give me a tumbler.'

"'Here, sir.'

"'Well, how do you like the fun of this noisy place?' said the prince, after a pause; 'tell me frankly,—are you very much diverted?'

"'How do you like it yourself?' replied I.

"'Egad!' resumed the prince, 'I must like it, since I have come here.'

"'That's no reason.'

"'Psha!'

"'We go to the same places every day, and yet they weary us.'

"'Then why go to them?'

"'Why does a man get drunk? It's not for the wine or brandy; such liquors might make the devil sneeze.'

"'Then why should we drink?'

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* It seems to me that these epithets applied to the poor people of the Barrier, are not in harmony with Eugene Sue's former vindications of the poor. His Bamboche is no puritan, surely, and yet he advocates the cause of Bamboche with great animation. Will he pretend that the crowd of poor men and women at this ball are naturally worse than Bamboche or Basquine? Again, when treating in the early part of this novel of Limousin, the working bricklayer, who used to drink his keg of wine every Sunday, and get gloriously drunk, he gave a whole chapter of fervent apologies for the excesses of the poor, the upshot of which came to this: *that the poor, for want of proper amusements, are driven to objectionable ones.* Then why does he apply such humiliating terms to them now? If a man is not consistent with himself, he is supposed not to have settled convictions; and when his convictions are unstable, his readers cannot trust to his doctrine.—*Translator's note.*

"'Why, to steep the senses, and forget the thought that grates upon you.'

"'Ah!' said the prince, sadly, and with a look of reflection that struck me: 'so it 's to banish care—to forget,—that you drink.'

"'Egad! I drag the chain all the week, and on Sunday, when I drink, I am a king, as the song says; and then, I don't mind telling you so, old cock, as a friend——'

"'A friend!'

"'An acquaintance, if you prefer it.'

"'So,—you know me?'

"'As well as if I had brought you up to the bottle.'

"The prince shrugged his shoulders and rejoined—

"'Well,—let 's hear what you have to say to a friend, since I am your friend.'

"'I am sick at heart.'

"'That must be very odd,' said the prince; 'tell us all about it.'

"'You must know, then, old cock, I have a wife.'

"'The devil!'

"'Well, then, my wife seems to me to be playing tricks, and cheating me with another man.'

"'Indeed!' said the prince, whilst his face suddenly grew dark and sad: 'indeed, my poor fellow, so your wife makes your heart ache, does she?'

"'And yet she is a very fine woman.'

"'So are they all.—Are you quite sure and positive?'

"'Too sure, my worthy; and the man 's a soldier.'

"'A soldier?'

"'An artillery soldier.'

"The prince shuddered—turned scarlet, but constrained himself.

"'A splendid fellow,—five feet eleven; and when he wears his uniform, you should see him.'

"'Enough!' said M. de Montbar, abruptly striking the table; 'no more.'

"'After all,' continued I, without minding the interruption, 'it must be admitted my wife was not to blame.'

"'Then why do you complain, blockhead?'

"'Because I love her in spite of her artillery soldier.'

"'In that case you are a base, mean fellow,' cried my master, waxing warmer every moment, as my own case presented such coincidences with his—'you are a vile wretch to love her still.'

"'That 's easily said; but you do n't know her,—so fine a woman!'

"'Do n't bother me,' roared the prince: 'let 's drink another glass, and say good night.'

"'Is that the way you would treat a friend—an old friend of the *Three Butts*?'

"Reminded of a place where he had got drunk repeatedly, the prince could not help showing some uneasiness, and replied—

"'The *Three Butts!*—you are quite mistaken: I do n't know any such tavern.'

"'Nonsense;—we have drank there in company several times.'

"'It 's not true.'

"'Listen to me, and I will prove it:—one night, last December, the weather being very bad indeed, you were drinking at the Three Butts;—it was a bottle of brandy.'

"'I tell you it was not I, you miserable dunce,' cried the prince; 'you are drunk.'

"'I know your name, too.'

"'You know my name?'

"'Of course I do;—your name is——'

"'What?'

"'George.'

"'Why not John, Louis, or Peter?'

"'Because—because it is George, Prince of Montbar!'

"I had uttered these last words very low, that none but my master might hear me: and consequently, during the first moments of his stupified amazement, unwilling to believe my words, and yet looking at me with haggard eyes and disordered features, the prince exclaimed—

"'What was that you said?'

"'Why, my worthy,' replied I, with a look of extreme simplicity; 'I say your name is George, Prince of Montbar: is there any thing so wonderful in that?'

"'Villain!' exclaimed my master; and whilst his eyes sparkled with passion, and his cheeks crimsoned with shame, he stood up with a threatening look.

"'Well,—what now? you look altogether changed because I tell you you are the——'

"'Hold your tongue!' exclaimed he, looking anxiously round, lest I might have been overheard by some of the tiplers: then, hastening to quit the disgraceful scene, where he found he had been recognised, my master struck the table.

"'Waiter!'

"'What! my hearty old cock, are you going to leave me?'

"'Waiter!' repeated the prince, not deigning a reply.

"'You shan't go,' said I, getting up likewise 'for if you attempt to stir I will cling to you and call out your princely name as loud as you called just now for the waiter.'

"This threat frightened my master: he looked at me for several moments with impatient steadfastness, attempting doubtless to make out my features beneath the coatings of paint that overlaid it; but, unable to accomplish it, he said to me again, as he cast an anxious glance around him.

"'Come tell me what bribe you expect to hold your tongue, villain?—money, is it not?'

"'I only want to speak of old times; but if you disdain my wish, I will expose your name, and raise up the *Titis* (the lightermen) and cry out—'Come and see what a fine curious thing we have here;—this merry andrew is no merry andrew at all,—he is the——'

"'I conjure you to be silent,' cried my master, almost imploringly; for I had raised my voice, and the nearest revellers had turned round to look at us. 'There are twenty louis in my pocket,' added the prince in my ear, 'come outside, and you shall have them.'

"'You only want to gammon me; you would not give them to me.'

"'I swear.'

"'No, such is not my humour: I have got hold of a prince,—a merry, rattling blade of a prince, without any pride, who is not ashamed to sit and drink with a poor fellow like me. I want to talk to you about my wife and the tall artillery soldier, so be quiet, or I call up the rest.'

"'Silence,—I will stop,' cried the prince; but tell me what you require, and let us make an end of it.'

"'Not so; we have not yet began, and I have much to say.'

"'Oh! what torture!' exclaimed the prince, striking the table with both his fists.

"'Tell me, truly, old cock, do n't you recollect me?—it must be my colours that puzzle you.'

"The prince bit his handkerchief with furious impatience.

"'I must remind you of certain occurrences to put you on the scent. One night you were drinking your bottle at the tavern of the *Three Butts*—you spilled some brandy on the table and wrote a name on the corecloth.'

"'What name?'

"'The name of Regina—odso!'

"The prince leapt up in his chair,—then was silent a moment in thoughtful reflection.

"'Ruffian!' at length he cried, 'do n't mention that name again: be quiet——'

"'No threats,—or I call up the Titis!'

"'Who are you?' muttered the prince, striving once more to make out my features; but not succeeding, he said with a sigh—

"'Impossible! impossible!—that voice—that accent!—I am quite bewildered.'

"For the first time, I am certain, the prince had at last become conscious of the degradation of his practices. But his momentary shame was followed by a fit of fury: he seized me by the collar,—squeezed it with all his force, and exclaimed—

"'Liar! you shall rue your infamous audacity.'

"'I was much stronger than M. de Montbar:—I overpowered him with ease, and with very little noise I contrived to disengage myself from his grasp.

"Suddenly an unexpected incident drew our attention, and imparted quite another character to my interview with the prince.

"A buzzing sound, rather partial at first, but swelling by degrees, burst forth in the ball-room. I turned my eyes to the spot, and saw at a distance of only twenty yards from us, the hideous shepherdess, surrounded by a large group of people of her own stamp, vociferating and gesticulating, and coming towards us. Immediately I felt the danger that threatened the prince:—and this time, terrified myself, I said to him—

"'The woman you refused to treat has collected a number of pals:—see, they are coming towards us; let 's stand on our defence.'

"'I do n't care about that,' cried the prince furiously, and—without looking to the spot I pointed out; 'I want to know who you are, villain.'

"Then, placing myself before the prince, erecting my head, changing at once my language and manners, and assuming the diction and the air of a gentleman of rank, I addressed the prince in a voice perfectly composed and even—

"'I have the honour to tell you again, sir,' said I, that the appearance of those people is threatening. We are here but two gentlemen of fortune, and we run the risk of being torn to pieces.'

"The prince was more astonished than ever at my altered language: his passion—his shame, increased in proportion with the social position he supposed to belong to me; but the nature of his resentment was otherwise made manifest.

"'I will not leave you, sir,' he said, 'till I know your name. Now, I understand the whole matter; your conversation throughout has been one tissue of epigrams and insulting allusions. All this will require a fearful satisfaction, sir,—and I will have it. I can't tear off your painted mask, but I will cling to you from this moment.'

"'Sir,' said I, 'look about you, and think of the present danger that impends over you. Your retreat is cut of: look behind you.—We cannot leave this cut-throat den without making a prodigious effort. I say *we*, sir, because two well-bred men,—two men of spirit are bound to support each other in such a stress;—besides, the threat you directed at me just now, sir, gives me a right to partake your danger.'

"'I thank you, sir,—I accept your offer: your language—your very sentiments on this occasion, prove to me at least, that whatever may take place between us by-and-by, will take place between gentlemen.'

"'In the meanwhile, sir,' said I to the prince, breaking up a stool, and giving M. de Montbar one of the legs as a weapon; 'take this to protect yourself with.—Above all, do n't strike first; but if they touch you, strike manfully, with good swinging blows, and hit the aim at their faces.'

"Whilst holding this dignified and polite language, which surprised the prince, I had observed the gathering storm. The hideous shepherdess, and a host of forbidding wretches, well fitted to support such a creature, had collected at the foot of the only staircase by which we could leave the gallery. Three or four policemen, stationed there to keep order, happened to be at some distance from the spot, and with so close a mass of people between them and the riotors, there was little expectation of any assistance from them.

"A new incident, on which I had not relied, came to aggravate the disorder.

"We had just stationed ourselves prudently on our defence at the top of the stairs, reckoning fairly enough on the neutrality of the tipplers in the gallery, as they were not so clamorous a set as the rest; they had seen me break up the stool and share the pieces with my companion; so they began to mount upon the tables, the better to judge the conflict.

"The tempest burst upon us by a torrent of insult, directed at my master, who was taken, not for the Prince of Montbar, but for a *gant-jaune* (yellow gloves), to use the language of the place. A Titi, a lad about twenty, with a rude vulgar countenance, who stood in the front row among the rioters, shrieked out, pointing to the prince:

"'Upon him, then. Look at the clown, who comes here to torment and strike our women. I know him—he 's a cunning blade—a *gant-jaune!*'

"'What him?—the toad!'

"'Let 's serve him out.'

"'Are your sure of it? Titi, is he a *gant-jaune?*'

"'Yes—I have seen him twenty times on horseback in the Champs Elysées, when I was picking up cigar stumps.'

"'What does he come here for?'

"'Do we ever go to their *bastringues,** I should like to know?'

"'Oh! the young smooth-face comes here to have his sport!'

"'Because he wears a shirt.'

"'The gentleman comes to laugh at poor people.'

"'Were we made for your amusement, you knave?'

"'Why do n't you answer, you ill-looking muzzle?'

"On hearing such filthy insults, the prince's face grew scarlet; his eyes glittered with rage. He sprang forward, in spite of my remonstrances—reached the bottom step in a moment, and plunged into the crowd of rioters.

"I followed him very closely.

"The mob gave way at first, and the prince, whose excitement was terrible, had dealt several blows on one side, whilst I did the same on the other, when the ranks, which had begun to open, were closing again.

"It was an awful moment. I expected every instant we should be thrown down and trampled under foot, when a well-known voice cried out, to the consternation of the whole mob:

"'The gendarmes!—the gendarmes!'

"The cry was a feint. The voice was that of honest Jerome, who, in spite of my recommendation not to quit his coach-box, had been unable to resist peeping in at the door, whence he had witnessed the confusion, and came so seasonably to our help.

"During the panic, which prevailed some moments after the cry, always so ominous in such a place, the Prince of Montbar and I cut our way with tolerable ease to the door, and the next instant were rattling along the road in Jerome's vehicle, and making for the Rue Dauphin.

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* *Bastringue*, is a suburban ball, where all the loose fishes of the barriers meet to enjoy their revelry.—*Translator's note.*

CHAPTER V.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

"THE prince and I had been together some hours; I had delivered to him the papers which served to exonerate the memory of Regina's mother. The animosity he had shown me at first had subsided, and given place to the warmest feelings of gratitude and friendship. Several times had he pressed me to divulge my name and address, and allow him to visit me.

"The time for taking leave was come.

"'So then you reside at Paris,' said the Prince of Montbar to me.

"'Wherever I may reside, sir, your letters will always reach me if directed to the chief office. I will send every four or five days to the post-office; I cannot explain myself more fully.'

"'Oh! you are really pitiless," exclaimed he. Then he continued: 'Excuse me, sir; excuse me—for saying so. Excuse me likewise for whatever fell from me to wound your feelings during our conversation; but you will allow for the strangeness of our meeting. I shall not insist, sir; I have not the honour to know you. I have no right to the unaccountable interest you have testified in my favour. What you have condescended to do for me has laid me under an everlasting gratitude. All that I regret, and bitterly I do, assuredly—is that you cannot accept the offer of my unalterable friendship. I would, however, deserve it—believe me.'

"And then as I returned no answer to the prince, who paused a moment, as hoping perhaps I would accept his friendship, he proceeded in a tone of despondency:

"'Once more forgive me—this last request; but at all events, give me your hand, sir; your loyal hand—and let me grasp it for the first, and for the last time.'

"Here we shook hands cordially.

"To explain the happiness, the pride I felt at that moment, would be impossible. I, a poor valet-de-chambre, who had brought my princely master to that pass by the mere ascendancy of an upright heart, inclining to virtue and rectitude.

"I confess it: for the first time in my life, I felt pride, and said to myself, 'Oh! thanks be to you, noble Claude Gerard, my friend and master. Thanks be to you, whose instructions and examples have purified my heart and given me some strength of soul.'

* * * *

"'Now, sir,' said I to the prince, 'farewell—take heart, and persevere.'

"Farewell, sir,' said he; 'and in case I should have to write to you?'

"'Have the kindness to direct your letter to Monsieur Pierre, poste restante, Paris.'

"'And you promise to answer me, don't you? At least let me have that consolation, I conjure you.'

"'I will answer you most certainly, and shall be both eager and happy to do so.'

"'Farewell then, sir, since it must be so; and farewell for ever.'

"Then letting down the coach window,' he said to Jerome:

"'Coachman—let me out.'

"After another most affectionate grasp, the prince got out, folded his cloak about him, and walked away.

"'Well!' said Jerome to me, 'are you satisfied with your night's amusement? Tell me that, my worthy *marquis*.'

"I am as satisfied and happy as a king, my dear Jerome; and now let us hasten to your lodging, for I want to take off my disguise; it's growing late.

"'It is near three o'clock,' replied Jerome, looking at his watch—and returning to his box, he drove off rapidly to his dwelling.

* * * *

* * * *

"It was five o'clock when I reached the Hotel de Montbar. I went up to my bedroom without meeting any one.

"I believe in my conscience that I have done well.

"Either the prince will succeed in recovering his wife's heart, and then Regina will be happy according to the laws of society, and her position will not be sacrificed; or Regina will not consent to give the prince another trial, and her love for Captain Just will prevail.

"Still Regina will be happy: for if I have any faith at present in the prince, I have as much in the love and character of Just.

"To-night I shall know all; but happen what may, I have the prince's word, and may depend upon it, Regina will have to-day the proofs of her mother's innocence—and this day will be a happy one for her.

"Oh! how I long for the evening; to know the events of this day so decisive for Regina!

17th February, 18 .

"It *is* midnight. I am alone—the day is ended.

"Let me collect my thoughts.

"I went down at eight o'clock, to get my mistress's apartment ready. About nine, Julietta came to me in the parlour, and said:

"'Good morning, Mr. Martin: take care not to make any noise in the picture-gallery.

"'Is the princess unwell?

"'Rather so; she has been all night in a state of extraordinary nervousness. She was so feverish, that she rang the bell twice for me to come down and prepare her some orange-water.

"'Yesterday, however, she did not appear to be ill.

"She was not well though; she spent a part of the evening in writing, and when she went to bed, she seemed quite out of spirits. Martin,' added Julietta in a lower tone; 'shall I tell you something?'

"'What?'

"'There is something going on in the house.'

"'What is it?'

"'I can't say; but I am certain it is so. There is an eel under the stone.'

"'Why do you suspect it?'

"'The prince has sent to inquire whether Madam could receive him this morning. This is the first time for many a day that Master has come to visit Madam in the morning. I tell you, Martin, there 's something lurking beneath it all.'

"'After all,' said I to Julietta, 'if there really is any change, we shall see.'

"Yes, we are in the front boxes, so to speak. All I desire is that it may not be a change to hurt our mistress; she is so kind. However,' said Julietta withdrawing, 'make as little noise as you can in the picture-gallery.'

"'Never fear, Miss.'

"At half-past eleven the princess rang for me.

"She was not in her dressing-gown, as is her usual case, but dressed. She had on a black dress, worn high over the neck, which enhanced the excessive paleness of her melancholy face.

"She seemed very thoughtful, very uneasy. She said to me—

"'M. de Montbar will call upon me presently. Unless to him, I am not at home to any one: you understand.'

"'Yes, princess.'

As I withdrew, she added:

"'Stay in the waiting-room to look after this order; and be there if I want you.'

"'Yes, princess.'

"Then I went away.

"Hardly had I let the cloth portal down, before I heard Regina exclaim—

"'At least this day will decide all.'

"According to my mistress's order, I remained in the saloon, instead of going up stairs to dress myself as usual in black, and lay aside my working clothes and apron, that I put on during the forenoon.

"At a quarter before twelve there was a ring—I opened the door. It was the prince.

"He held in his hand the pocket-book I had given him the night before. He was as pale as Regina, and I could easily detect in his face the violent emotions by which he had been agitated.

"Is the princess within? said he; then glancing at my unlucky apron, he said to me severely—

"'It is most extraordinary that at this late hour you should have your apron on in Madame de Montbar's saloon.'

"'Prince, the reason is——Madam——'

"'Enough!—no excuses; go and dress yourself suitably,' answered the prince, haughtily, without waiting to hear me out. 'Is Madame de Montbar within?'

"'Yes, prince.'

"He entered the first saloon with a hasty step, closing the door behind him.

* * * * *

"Some time afterwards the princess's bell was violently rung. I ran up to the parlour, and as I was about entering, I heard Regina say to her husband with great tenderness:

"'Oh, George! the devotion of my whole life never can discharge the debt I owe you.'

"I was afraid on hearing these words lest my feelings might betray me; so I stood a moment or two behind the curtains of the portal, and then, half raising them:

"'The princess has rung?'

"'Yes, wait,' said she, in an emphatic tone, and hastily folding a letter she had just written. Regina's cheeks were vividly flushed, her eyes were moistened with tears, and yet they glittered with radiant joy.

"The prince was standing by the fire side, his face was very pale, and he was so much under the influence of his emotion, that I could see his whole body quiver from top to toe; and yet, despite his nervousness, despite his pallor, a suppressed delight was visible in every feature. No doubt he had began to hope.

"When the beautiful Regina had sealed the letter, she said to me in a voice tremulous with joy:

"'Take this letter to my father instantly, and to *himself*—you understand, to *himself*. My carriage is ready—take it, that you may get there the sooner. Don't lose a minute—not a second.'

"'I must remind the princess——'

"'What of?' said she, hastily.

"'That perhaps Melchior will not suffer me to see the baron.'

"'True," said Regina, turning to her husband, 'you see how it is—I had better go myself. Order my carriage to be drawn up directly,' said she to me.

"'I assure you,' said the prince, 'that in your father's weak state of health, your unexpected appearance—especially on this *occasion*,' added he, laying a stress on the word, 'might give him a dangerous shock. Now, your letter, on the contrary, will prepare him for your visit, and will be infinitely better for him, believe me.'

"You are probably right. But, nevertheless, if Melchior should prevent Martin from seeing my father?'

"'I would willingly go myself,' said the prince reflecting, 'but the impropriety would be the same. However, I will take that course, if your letter cannot otherwise reach your father's hand; but it seems impossible to me that it should be kept back." Then turning to me, the prince said to me authoritatively:

"'This letter *must* be delivered into M. de Noirlieu's hands. Do you hear?—it *must* be!'

"'Prince, I will do my utmost.'

"'Enough!' said my master, sharply.

"'Make haste, Martin, and do all you can,' said the princess kindly; conceiving, doubtless, that the prince was too harsh. 'At any rate, return here with all speed; and, as I told you, take my carriage.'

"'Yes, princess.'

"'And get in *properly*,' added the prince.

"Then, as I looked at him with a stupid stare, bewildered by this recommendation, he shrugged up his shoulders, and turned his back upon me.

"As I left the parlour, I heard my master say to Regina, alluding evidently to me,

"'How stupid he is!'

"'He is no genius, certainly; but he is honest and attentive,' replied my mistress.

"The prince's severity to me, after the great service I had rendered to him and to Regina, was most grating to my feelings; and I could not get it out of my head for several hours after.

"I was coming down from my room, where I had been to *dress myself* properly (as the prince expressed it) before going to the baron's house, when I met old Louis, rejoicing in his master's joy. The meeting was most opportune; for I was quite at sea with regard to my master's direction to *get properly* into his wife's carriage.

"'Mr. Louis,' said I to him, 'I have a question to ask you.'

"'What is the matter, my dear lad?'

"'The princess is sending me to her father, with a letter so important and so immediate, that I am ordered to take her carriage. Must I get up behind, beside the coachman, or inside the carriage?'

"'Inside, my dear boy, inside,' replied old Louis with a look of importance; 'for you wear no livery, and you are the bearer of a most important message. It is just like me, when the prince sent me to present the *corbeille de marriage* to Miss Regina de Noirlieu. I got, with the diamond-casket, into the carriage drawn in *gala*; but, of course, according to the respect due to one's master, I did only seat myself in front of the *berline*; so that you must get inside, my dear boy—inside.'

"'Thank you, Mr. Louis.'

"I was running to the coach-house, when the formal old servant detained me by the arm, and said to me, as though it was a most important point in his recommendation,

"'And once more let me advise you to seat yourself only in *front* of the carriage; otherwise you would be guilty of an unpardonable liberty.'

"'Be assured, Mr. Louis, now that you have instructed me, I am quite incapable of so much disrespect.'

"I had descended four or five steps, when old Louis called me back with looks of dismay, exclaiming:

"'Martin, attend to me—Oh! gracious me! I had nearly forgotten.'

"'What more, Mr. Louis?'

"'And above all, tell Mr. Johnson (this was the prince's head coachman) if he should omit it, which I don't think he will, for he has served in too good establishments to do so, to raise the carriage *blinds* over the coach windows, just as he does when he returns with the empty coach.'

"'What does that signify, Mr. Louis?' I inquired, curious to learn this new rule of etiquette.

"'When the blinds of a carriage are raised, and there is no footman behind, it signifies that neither the master nor mistress is inside. Do you feel the importance of the matter?'

"'Certainly, Mr. Louis—and I shan't forget,' said I, running down the staircase, whilst the worthy valet, hanging over the banister, and making a speaking trumpet with both hands repeated:

"'Above all, seat yourself in front.'

"'Yes, Mr. Louis,' said I again, hastening to the stable.

CHAPTER VI.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

"THE berline was already prepared, the grooms were standing by the horses' heads, for the head coachman never put the orses to the carriage himself, and only mounted his box at the latest moment. As for the rest, Mr. Johnson, like a true English coachman, was a rigid observer of etiquette; nor was it necessary for me to give him the slightest hint, for, on hearing I was to ride on the berline, he instantly directed one of his men to raise the blinds. After that, one of the grooms handed him his whip, and the other the reins; and that important personage, almost as big as M. Dumolard, and whose large ruddy face was over-crowned with a white wig, got up heavily on his box, and we started off for the Faubourg du Roule.

"For my part, obedient to duty, I seated myself in front of the empty carriage; and in spite of the many thoughts with which my fancy was teeming, I could not forbear smiling as I reflected on these domestic forms, and compared them with the simplicity of Doctor Clement, that man whose heart and mind were so truly great; and who when he took me out of the hospital, compelled me to sit beside him in the coach.

"Many masters imagine that in the minute observance of these petty puerile customs, lies the essential conditions of the respect which the little owe to the great. It is a serious mistake: I have heard a thousand times with what insolent audacity servants spoke of those masters who were most punctilious; whilst other masters who were more affable, were able by the simple ascendancy of a noble character and high personal worth, to inspire in their attendan's those habits of sincere deference and respect, which were precisely similar in the presence and in the absence of their master.*

"I shall never forget with what affecting reve- nce an honest lad, who had been in the service of Viscount Chateaubriand, one day spoke to me of that illustrious man, as much to be admired for his heart, for his character, and for his genius.

"'*Whenever we speak of the viscount,*' said the worthy boy with charming *naiveté*, '*it's as if he was listening to us.*' But that renowned author, minister, and statesman, had known poverty himself, and had struggled a thousand times against the most frightful hunger, misery, and wretchedness.

* Servants, especially the male ones, are a strange set, very unruly, and hard to manage. They are, however, most partial to affable masters, and the reason is obvious, —because it flatters their self-conceit.—*Translator's note.*

* * * *

"We arrived at M. de Noirlieu's, I left the carriage at the door, I went in, and Melchior, as usual, prepared to meet me and dispatch my errand on the *perron*.

"'Mr. Melchior', said I to him, 'I have a letter from the princess to deliver to the baron *himself*, such is my order.'

"The mulatto smiled disdainfully, and shrugged —his shoulders.

"'This won't do now, Mr. Melchior,' said I raising my voice, 'the message I bring is so important and hurried, that she ordered me to take the carriage.'

"'Her carriage!' said the malatto, surprised.

"Yes, I have just alighted from it: it is at the door—so show me instantly to the baron.'

"'Impossible!' he replied rudely.

"'Impossible?'

"'The baron is unwell, and refuses to see any body.'

"'Hear me, Mr. Melchior,' cried I, 'if you don't obey my mistress' order on the instant——'

"'Well! what if I don't?'

"'I will take you by both arms, thus (doing it at the same time),—I will turn you about this way, (and I suited the action to the word again)—and then I will enter the house, calling out with all my might to the baron—he will answer me—and I will deliver my letter.'

"So saying, I truly made poor Melchior turn a pironette, for he was too old and feeble to struggle with me; and I rushed into the house, exclaiming with all my might:

"'M. de Noirlieu! M. de Noirlieu!'

"'Rascal!' roared the mulatto, running after me; 'hold your tongue.'

"'What noise is that? who is calling me! Melchior! Melchior! where are you?'

"I crossed a saloon, guided by these sounds, opened a door, and found myself in the presence of M. de Noirlieu, who had just risen from his elbow-chair.

"The mulatto, foaming with rage, was close at my heels. I hastened to give the princess's letter to the baron, saying as I did so:

"'Baron, I bring you good tidings, I presume, for madam was so anxious about it, that she has sent me here in the carriage.'

"Whilst he was unsealing the letter with a quivering hand, I added:

"'I beg pardon for the noise I made to make my way in; but M. Melchior would not allow me to present myself before you, baron.'

"M. de Noirlieu did not let me proceed; hardly had he read the letter from Regina—a very short one apparently—before he changed colour several times, shook from head to foot, and exhibited all the signs of the deepest emotion; exclaiming with a faltering voice:—

"'My God! she says she is sure of it! a revelation this very day! I may love her once more—and love her everlastingly. It is too much happiness at once—if true. But no—no—it is impossible; and yet she only asks to see me to prove it.'

"Then the old man, whose tears were trickling down his wasted cheeks, fell back into his chair.

"'Master, what ails you?' cried Melchior, running to him. 'Wretch!' he added, looking at me, 'see what you have done!'

"'I think there is no harm done, M. Melchior,' said I, 'on the contrary.'

"And so it proved; for after this first gush of feeling, the old man, standing straight up in firm attitude, said to the mulatto,

"'Quick—my hat and cloak.'

"'What' said Melchior, bewildered, 'do you mean?'

"Without answering him, M. de Noirlieu said to me,

"'My *daughter's* carriage——' he paused a moment as though he felt unspeakably happy to utter the word.

"'My daughter's carriage is at the gate, you say?'

"'Yes, baron.'

"'And my daughter is at home?'

"'Yes, baron.'

"'Even were she not, I would abide her return,' said he to himself. 'Let us go.' He turned again to Melchior:

"'Well! where are the hat and cloak?'

"What!' said the mulatto, 'you forget, baron, you are in your dressing-gown.'

"'Have I the time to dress!' replied the old man. 'Come, make haste, give me a hat and cloak.'

"'But,' said the mulatto, 'can you be in earnest?'

"'Did you hear my orders?' said the baron, erecting himself, and in a determined voice that would brook no contradiction, which intimidated the mulatto.

"'Bring them to me in the carriage,' said the old man to Melchior. 'I won't lose a second.'

"Thereupon he marched on before me with so steady and alert a step, that it was all I could do to follow him. He went down the steps with juvenile alacrity. Melchior came running up out of breath with the hat and cloak, just as his master, regardless of being seen bareheaded and folded within his grey flannel-wrapper, was passing into the street. I then opened the carriage-door, he jumped in, and said to me,

"'Quick, quick; to my daughter's.'

"We soon reached the hotel de Montbar. I opened the door to the aged baron, who sped up the staircase so rapidly that I had hardly time to overtake him, and usher him in. However, I contrived to get before him, and announced with a feeling of proud delight,

"'Monsieur le Baron de Noirlieu.'

"'My father!' cried Regina, throwing herself into his arms as I let down the curtains of the portal.

* * * * *

"About half an hour after the baron's arrival, the prince came out of Regina's apartment. He looked thoughtful, almost elated; he said to me—and he could hardly suppress the joy he felt on giving me the order—

"'Madame de Montbar will be at home to nobody, except Captain Clement.'

"He then left the apartment.

"About five o'clock the old baron retired, his daughter accompanying him to the lowest step of the *perron*. The serene quietude that overspread the old man's features sufficiently bespoke that the proofs of his late wife's innocence had appeared indubitable to him, and had completely absolved her in his mind.

"When she returned, Regina said to me:

"'I shall be at home for none but Captain Just Clement. Put lights in my apartment. You need not call me to dinner, Julietta will attend on me, if I may want any thing afterwards. As soon as the captain arrives you will announce him.'

"'Yes, princess.'

"At six o'clock the captain arrived. He anticipated some serious event, for he said to me on his entrance, with some alarm in his looks,

"'Has any thing happened to the princess?'

"'No, Mr. Just; not that I know of.'

"'I breathe again,' said he in an undertone, and his face brightened up.

"'Poor fellow!' thought I.

"I introduced him.

"I had made up my mind, whatever might happen, to listen this time to the conversation between the lovers: not from any motive of vulgar curiosity, but because, for their own sakes, it was necessary I should know their resolution.

"Fortunately, I had an excuse in case of surprise: to appear that moment to come in with a light.

'As soon as Just had entered, I went and fetched a lamp, which I put down on a side table, to take up when required. By standing in the middle of the room I was within hearing.

"Regina had continued silent for some time, when I heard Just say to the princess,

"'Regina, what is the matter? After your laconic note—this paleness—this silence——'

"'Just, listen to me. This morning I received some papers containing proofs of my mother's innocence.'

"'Indeed!' cried he with exultation. 'I can feel it as strongly as yourself. How happy you must be. But the happiness bears with it a something so holy—so deeply venerable—that I can well conceive your feelings.'

"'The proofs were so complete, so evident,' resumed Regina, 'that a little while ago my father was here, and more loving than ever. He spoke of my mother with tears of admiration.'

"'At length your sorrows have reached their term?'

"'Just—for pity's sake, do not yet interrupt me. He who has thus revenged my mother's memory—he who deserves my eternal gratitude.'

"'Eternal, unalterable!' exclaimed the captain, for I know all you have endured. How often has the loss of your father's affection, the recollection of the blur on your mother's fame, saddened the purest joys of our love! and, therefore, Regina, I will share in your gratitude. I will——'

"'Stop!' cried Regina. 'My God! one would think it was a snare that I had spread to entrap his generosity,' added she.

"'A snare to my generosity!

"'Know you whom it is I am indebted to for that unalterable gratitude you desire to share?

"'Proceed.'

"'Support me, my God? It is——'

"'It is?'

"'My husband.'

"There was a moment of deep silence, during which I thought I heard Regina's stifled sobs.

"'It is your husband—well!' resumed Just, in a voice stamped with astonishment. 'Wherefore these tears—these fearful misgivings, Regina? I tell you again, it is not for you alone to discharge this sacred debt to him to whom you owe the happiest day, the proudest perhaps, of your life. Why, then, should not I, who have shared in your joys and sorrows, partake also your gratitude to M. de Montbar?'

"'Why?' cried Regina, 'why? because there are things that you don't suspect.'

"Explain yourself, Regina.'

"'Since my husband's return, you know, my situation had become intolerable—to dissemble my love to you, when that love filled my heart—my life—I was unable any longer. It is as impossible for me to hide what is true, as to say what is false; and, therefore, have I frankly told my husband that, considering how he and I had lived together for upwards of a year, a separation was inevitable between us.'

"'We had often discussed the project; but why not apprise me of it?'

"'My God! where is the use of tormenting you with such painful subjects? I only meant to mention the matter when I could say every thing is settled—we are free.

"'Does your husband object to the separation?'

"'He has been admirably generous,' replied Regina; 'he will not suffer my gratitude to influence in any way my determination to separate from him. If I persist, he will set out to-morrow for Italy, and restore me my liberty, trusting to my delicacy for the observance of the proprieties, and to yours, Just, likewise, he said——'

"'Such conduct is dignified and noble,* I confess,' said Just, feelingly; 'but in that case——'

"'But in that case,' echoed Regina, 'it is unaccountable, you mean: that I don't say to you,—we are free; let us realise that fine, dazzling dream, which we hardly dared to contemplate before. Who prevents us? My husband restores me to liberty—I have recovered my father's tenderness—my mother's memory is avenged. Just, my well-beloved, I am yours at last—now and for evermore.'

"'Regina, you frighten me! Is it delirium?'

"'No, it is not delirium; my husband *loves* me. Do you now understand?'

"'He loves you!' repeated the captain, as if he could not credit what he heard.

"'Yes, he has never ceased to love me—to love me with the fondest passion.'

"'He!' exclaimed Just derisively.

"'I did all I could not to believe it,' exclaimed Regina; but how could I distrust his tears—his humiliating confessions, so frank and full of contrition that they became affecting—how could I distrust his dejection—his sincere despair—his harrowing submission? But where is the use, Just, of telling you these things? He must have been sincere. I trembled for fear he would convince me—and I am convinced.'

"There was a moment's pause.

"Just was the first to resume.

"'What does M. de Montbar require, then?'

"'He requires nothing—he demands nothing; he *supplicates*, that's all.† Yes, after the immense service he has rendered me—after having convinced me, proved to me, that he has tenderly loved me—he implores me—alas! there lies his strength.'

"'What does he desire of you?' resumed Just in a choking voice.

"'He supplicates me to let myself be loved—to leave him the hope of winning back my love. "Should this last attempt prove vain," said he, "my fate will be accomplished. You will never hear of me again, and you may then avail yourself of the liberty I restore to you this day; for, understand me fully, Regina, whatever may happen, whatever you may resolve upon, you are free—absolutely free. I demand nothing in the name of my rights—I have lost them. If I dare to implore you for the last time, it is in the name of my love, in the name of what I have suffered, and the pain I still endure." That was all he said to me, and I fully believe him. I have made him no promise; but I swore to him that I would never forget the duties which my gratitude dictated. Now, Just, it is to you I address myself: what's to be done? *what shall we do?*'

CHAPTER VII.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

"'REGINA!' said the captain in an impassioned tone, 'Regina, do you love me?'

"Can you ask me?' answered she, with inexpressible simplicity of feeling.

* Dignified and noble! Monsieur Sue? It would have been far more so, if the henpecked husband had broken a good oaken stick upon the young Lothario's back, and reminded him of the father's maxims whilst he was belabouring the son's bones. Is it a part of the conjugal creed in France for husbands to hand over their wives to their lovers, when the lack-a-daisical matrons have grown tired of keeping the commandments? And is it the business of a public instructor to justify the most lacerating crimes that can be inflicted on the social system, in order to raise the voluptuous passion of love above the most sacred duties of our species? There is not in the whole circle of moral infamy any thing more deplorable than the doctrines sought to be *justified* by this conversation between Just and Regina.—*Translator's note.*

† If he were to put you in the coalhole, Lady Regina, for a few hours, and leave you to *supplicate*, the thing would be more intelligible.—*Translator's note.*

"'Then,' replied Just, in a lower voice which quivered with passion, 'then—no foolish generosity—accept the liberty that is offered to you—the happiness. The future is ours, a long futurity of love—hear that, Regina. A love no longer constrained by duty, as formerly; but a love that will be free, ardent, and wild!'

"'Oh! don't speak so to me—don't look at me thus; you break my spirit, you make me a coward. Alas! I need all my fortitude, when I reflect——'

"'And I won't have you reflect on any thing except our love, my Regina,' said Just, with increasing energy. 'I want you—whilst still expecting that happy moment, so sweet, so near at hand—to enjoy with me the delightful, the racking thought—soon we shall be free!'

"'Enough! oh, enough. Pity me, then,' muttered the princess.

"Just, merciless and inflexible, continued the same strain, in a voice so tender and penetrating, that in spite of myself, I started with jealousy and grief.

"'Say then, Regina, don't you understand, don't you feel the ecstasy of those words: *we are free?—free.* It signifies that I shall be near you—there, ever at your side, my adored angel—*free!* It signifies the life of love, of art, of poetry, of noble endeavour, of generous deeds, of sweetest solitude—that loneliness we have so often fancied; for you know it, we used to say: in love every thing is comprehended, from the furious burning of the senses, to the softest and noblest aspirations of the soul, the mind, and the heart. Free! my angel; it is to spend my life with thee, for thee; to be able every moment to kiss your hands, your neck, your eyes, your hair.'

"'Oh! silence—silence; you set me on fire,' stammered Regina, whilst her voice expired on her tongue.

"And methought she laid her petitioning hand on his lips, to stop her lover's words.

"'Well! no, no—I will not speak of it again,' resumed Just in a voice as tremulous, as soft as Regina's; 'no, I will no longer speak of it, for I too, am devoured and consumed by such images. Well, when once we are free, after those voluptuous trances, the mere thought of which bewilders us, we will seek repose in the expansion of two souls, full of freshness and serenity. Oh! come, come, Regina, come; we shall not be surrounded with that splendour which often feels cumbersome to you; but we shall be rich in happiness—so rich as to have within ourselves a storehouse of bliss sufficient for a world. And if some day you may chance to remember your former opulence, say but the word, and my labour, my intellect, shall make treasures for you—treasures as pure as the springs from whence they shall flow, and glorious for both of us. Oh! come, my angel—come, I say; we are no longer our own masters—you are mine, and I am yours.'

"'Pardon, Just, pardon; you forget—remember——'

"What, poor generous thing! your husband has vindicated your mother's fame; he has done his duty as a man of honour. I was the first to tell you, that I too was grateful to him; but in what does that affect our loves?'

"'But he loves me; his mind is distressed—he is unhappy.'

"He loves you!' exclaimed Just, 'he loves you! How so? Did he not forsake you a whole year and treat you with cold disdain? Has he not wounded your feelings incurably? you, whom he should have cherished, and worshipped on his knees—and one day, seeing that through his own fault, he had lost that noble and generous affection, of which you had given him so many proofs, he is seized with a fancy to come and tell you that he loves you still—and can you believe him?'

"'He says the truth, Just; I swear to you, he says the truth. If it were in my power to impart his secret to you, then would you see that, however hard it may be to explain the reason, his unhappy love is but too real.'

"'And is not mine equally real? have I not suffered as much mental anguish?—have you forgotten it? You ordered me to leave you; it was torture to go, but I obeyed. You bid me return afterwards, I did so. Later still, when both of us had to struggle with the delirium of our passion, how many times have you not said to me in an expiring voice, when broken, bewildered, and dissolving into tears, I fell at your feet:—Oh! my dearest Just, it is generous of you to heed my prayer, to respect me! would you say, for alas! I adore you—I am defenceless. All I can say is, have pity.'

"'Yes!—yes! you have been kind, noble, and ever full of courage.'

"'I was kind, noble, full of courage, because I knew that any error would cause you a remorse so terrible, that my love itself might be impotent to assuage it. That thought lent me fortitude and courage. But now we may be free, happy, and without remorse on your side. Gad's death! I cannot thus fling away my good fortune to the winds; and since your husband has restored you to liberty——'

"'But his generosity is too much for me to bear.'

"'His generosity? *pardieu!* how great it is. What else could he have done? Tell me—*you have ceased to love him.* Fortunately, that idea destroys every bond, every chain pretended indissoluble. Is it in a court of *law* he will maintain his love? Will he offer to fight with me? Well, let him do so. Let him kill me, or let me kill him.'

"'Oh! Just, away with such ideas—they are horrible!'

"'Say then, would a duel, whether it turned out fortunate or unfortunate to him, change his position? He asks you to let him try to win back your affections. As to that request, I can but repeat: *do you love me?*'

"'Do I love you!'

"'Then why this probation? Does he not know that you will never say to him: endeavour to make yourself beloved.'

"'My God!' cried Regina, 'should I experience all this frightful torture, if I knew what to do; if, like yourself, I were able to take a resolution bravely? That is easy to you. But I cannot do it like you, all on a sudden—especially when I think of——'

"'Regina,' said Just, 'you hesitate.'

"'For pity's sake!' cried the poor creature, bursting into tears, 'don't speak to me—don't look at me thus. You know full well that I love you. Yes, Just, I love you distractedly. My only desire would be to spend my days with you. But I cannot help thinking that *he*, too, loves me—that he is distressed. He cannot appeal to his rights to awaken my love, I know it; but he might use them as weapons against me, and make my life intolerable—by separating me for ever from you, or by producing an *eclat*, which terrifies me now, in spite of my love for you. Say, Just, is not that true? Could he not do us great mischief?'

"'Great mischief,' answered Just; 'but one injury breeds another.'

"'My God! how wretched I am,' exclaimed Regina in a tone of despair; 'you will listen to nothing; you are blind to my duty towards *him* who has just vindicated my mother's memory, and who has shown himself so admirably generous to me. Yet we ought not to be unjust and unmerciful to those who weep and repent.'

"Regina sobbed aloud. After a short silence,

during which a great revolution must have taken place in the captain's sentiments, he resumed in a mild melancholy tone:

"'You are right, Regina; we must not be unjust or unmerciful to those who love—who repent, and who are cruelly afflicted, that they are beloved no longer.'

"'What mean you?'

"'The truth, Regina. For a time the fatal selfishness of passion blinded me, and I said to you, let us think only of ourselves—let us profit by your husband's generosity; and, happy ourselves, let us forget his misery. Regina, this was wrong—it was cowardly.'

"'Oh! you are the best, the noblest of men.'

"'I love you, Regina, that's all; I wish us to be always worthy of each other. Just now, broken and tortured by one of those terrific struggles to which none but great hearts are exposed, you came to me in your weakness—in your anguish—in your alarm. Poor woman! and to me, whom you deem to be generous and resolute, you said: *what must I do?*'

"'Yes, Just, speak; and whatever you ordain, I will obey; say, what must I do?'

"'It is not I that shall tell you, Regina, but my father,' resumed the captain, in a voice deeply agitated. 'He has often repeated the same doctrine to me in these simple words: My son, I never tolerate indecision in the gravest matters of actual life; there is but one part to choose, and that is duty. As for consequences, sooner or later, good begets good; fools and wicked people say that we are often the dupes of our own hearts; no such thing. When has a good and upright action proved fatal to its author?—never. Never heed ingratitude. Good is done for its own sake. The man on whom you bestow your cloak will not be the less warm because he may prove ungrateful. Think no more of him, but do good to another. If people do not kiss the giver's hand, neither do they tear it. There is a proverb which says—do what you ought, whatever may happen. But this is my maxim:—do what you ought, and good will follow.'

"'Yes, I think I hear your good and noble father,' said the princess. 'Such were his sentiments—such were his words.'

"'Well, Regina, these instructions shall guide us. We will say, like my father: let us do what we ought, and good will follow. You owe your husband an everlasting gratitude; he has convinced you that he loves you; he repents his errors, and asks you, as an act of mercy, to suffer him by his devotedness to endeavour to win back your heart. Regina, you will not hesitate.'

"'Just—oh! my God!' said the princess in a tremulous voice. 'I do n't know—but at present, I am afraid; this trial terrifies me.'

"'It must alarm you, Regina; for it alarms me likewise for my love. Were it otherwise, I would not give you this advice.'

"'What mean you?'

"'If this trial had previously been resolved upon by yourself, Regina, for me to suffer you to make it would be an act of shameless hypocrisy.'

"'My God! do you think I can still love *him* with passion?'

"'Should I say yes, I might be mistaken, Regina. Should I say no, I might also be deceived. What will be the result of this trial, of this dutiful conduct?'

"'Alas! you know it not any more than myself, and again I tell you, at present the uncertainty dismays me.

"'Whatever may be the result, *good* will follow, as my father said.'

"'Good!'

"'Either you will continue to love me,* Regina, and this trial, by its generosity, will have strengthened and hallowed our love, or your husband will have won back your affections, and your happiness as well as his, will be secured.'

"'But yourself?'

"'My part will likewise be a noble one, Regina; yes, a noble, a great, a consolatory one. The happiness you will both enjoy, I shall have partly contributed to by my sacrifice. Call you that nothing?'

"'But I!' cried Regina, giving way to a new terror at the idea of losing her love; 'I will not accept this trial—I tell you it terrifies me. I thought I was strong and generous, but I find I am not—that's all. My husband offers me my liberty, I will profit by his offer. Besides, have you not done for me as much as he? were you not wounded for my sake in a dreadful duel? and did you not rescue me from infamy, and save my life as well as my honour? for I should have killed myself had I fallen a victim to the outrage from which you delivered me.'

"'Hear me, Regina.'

"'No, no,' cried the princess, with increasing animation. 'After all, I love you—I love only you; in this world I have no other hope than you. You came to me when I was so very wretched; you comforted me. Had it not been for you, I should have died. I will not run the risk of losing you. We must not be selfish, you say—granted. Neither ought we to commit suicide, when our death can be of no avail to others.'*

"'Regina, I conjure you.'

"'I know my own weak heart, I presume. I tell you, therefore, it will be impossible for me to love my husband in future. I will take it all upon myself. He offers this liberty to *me*, and I it is who accept it.'

"'I conjure you.'

"Never hope for it at my hands. You may say, if you will, that I am mean, selfish, unfeeling. Well, you must love me in spite of these faults. So much the worse! Every one must look to his own feelings—you said so, and——'

"A violent pull at the outer bell summoned me at this moment, so I could not hear the termination of the sentence. I ran to open the door. It was M. de Noirlieu, father of Regina.

"Regina could not foresee this visit from her father, so unseasonable at that moment, when her heart was pouring out its effusive passion.

"What was to be done? I could not say she was absent; it would have been a useless falsehood, and her father would have awaited her return; I read it in his looks beaming with greedy delight, for his fatherly tenderness had not been satiated by his morning visit.

"My daughter *is* at home?' said he, rather affirming than inquiring.

"'Yes, baron.'

"I opened as loudly as I could the door of the first chamber, in order to rouse Regina's attention; I preceded the baron, and before reaching the parlour, I coughed repeatedly. Thanks to these contrivances, when I raised up the cloth portal, Regina and Just appeared to be composed and self-possessed.

"The princess said to me harshly:

* He calls that result, *good!* Of course, the miserable woman, placed between two such guardians as a sheepish husband and a wily sophist, will continue to prefer her lover to her legitimate lord, when once her heart has been sufficiently defiled to encourage a sinister connexion.—*Translator's note.*

* The less you say about suicide, Monsienr Sue, the better. A man ought not to commit it under any circumstances even though he could give worlds to those he loved by so doing. The scene in "The Mysteries of Paris," wherein you describe a love-sick husband as quietly taking himself off because he deems himself an obstacle to the happiness of his wife, was a blemish to that celebrated work, and as such it has been censured by every critic whose judgment was deserving of confidence.—*Translator's note.*

"'I had forbidden you to——'

"'Monsieur le Baron de Noirlieu!' I hastened to reply, interrupting Regina.

"'My father!' exclaimed she.

"The venerable man advanced to his child, embraced her tenderly several times, and said to her:

"'My child! it is I again. But you need not wonder. I only saw you this morning for two hours.'

"Here he broke off, and remarking for the first time the captain's presence, he started with surprise.

"Regina said to him composedly enough:

"'Father, this is Captain Clement.'

"Just bowed deeply. The baron resumed with great affability:

"'I am doubly fortunate, sir, in having the honour to meet you at my daughter's, for I have frequently heard your name quoted with the respect that is due to it. Your noble father, Doctor Clement, was one of those men whom we love and esteem above all.'

"'It is to the kind remembrance, sir, which I am proud to see you have preserved of my father, that I ascribe so obliging a reception, and of which I sincerely wish I were more worthy,' answered Just, deferentially.

"After which, the captain bowed to Regina and her father, and took his leave.

"At the same time, I overheard M. de Noirlieu say to his daughter, referring to the captain:

"'What a fine young man!'

"Just passed rapidly by me, so thoughtful as not to perceive me.

"I followed him.

"When he had reached the waiting-room, he stopped, and looking round:

"'Ah! there you are, Martin; I was looking for you. Tell me, have you got any writing materials? I forgot to give Madame de Montbar an address she asked me for; and not wishing to disturb her now she is with her father, I would prefer leaving it in writing.'

"'Here is what you require, M. Just,' said I, pointing to the paper, ink, and pens that were lying on my table for the use of visitors when calling to see the princess during her absence.

'The captain, without sitting down, wrote a few hasty words, and as I watched him attentively at some distance, I saw a tear fall on the paper.

"He closed the note with a wafer; and lest I should perceive the tears in his eyes, he said to me as he walked to the door, without turning his face;

"'Deliver that note to the princess, I request of you, when the baron shall have left.'

"Then he departed.

"Must I confess the trespass? I opened and read that note; it contained only these words:

"'I am gone—it was necessary—be of good heart. *I will wait for events.* If you should have to write to me, address your letters to my house at Paris. They will be sure to reach me.'

"A big tear had fallen upon the line—*I will wait for events.*

"I closed the letter again.

"About ten o'clock, M. de Noirlieu took his departure.

"The princess accompanied her father to the staircase; when she returned, I said to her:

"'Here is a note left by Captain Clement for the princess.'

"She took it from me; and as she did so, her excitement was so nervous, that twice her little hand shook against the silver plateau on which I presented it.

"She then said to me, in so low and feeble a voice as was hardly audible to me:

"'Very good—you may retire now, and shut the door!

'It appeared to me that Regina stumbled twice, and I thought I saw her lean against the side table for support as she was crossing the front room. Nor was I mistaken.

"Scarcely for a minute had the curtains of the portal fallen back behind her, just time enough to glance over the inauspicious note, when I heard the noise of a fall, and ran in.

"'Regina had fallen down senseless, close to the fireplace, holding in her hand the captain's note.

"At the risk of whatever might befal, I snatched up the note and flung it into the fire, not wishing to trust to Julietta's discretion; then I pulled the bell violently several times.

"The princess's chamber attendant answered it immediately.

"'Our mistress has fainted,' cried I. 'Make haste, Miss Julietta, to assist her, and I will send Madame Felix to help you.' That was the name of the other chambermaid.

"Thereupon, rushing out, I ran down to the buttery, where I found the woman, who hastened to join Julietta.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

20th June, 18—.

"UPWARDS of four months have elapsed since Captain Just left Paris, and abandoned Regina to her own feelings and consciousness.

"I have never been able to discover his retreat; the discretion of the old servant, Susan, has proved impenetrable.

"All I have been able to learn from her is this: that the captain had languished for two months between life and death; latterly he is convalescent.

"I had not forgotten that the prince, during our nocturnal meeting, and our conversation after the fancy ball at the barrier, had asked me as a favour to allow him to write to me, should he require my advice. I had requested him to address me his letters, *poste restante*, at Paris, directed to M. Peter.

"Jerome's wife had gone herself once a week to the office, to inquire if there were any letters for M. Peter.

"The prince wrote to me very frequently and copiously.

"'One of his last letters, which I received yesterday, is in many respects the summary of my correspondence with the prince. It gives a concise idea, and a perfectly sincere one, of his relations with Regina during that period of four months.

"I produce it now as a supplement to my journal.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRINCE OF MONTBAR TO HIS FRIEND M. PETER.

"19th June, 18—.

"I WAS obliged to cast a steadfast look back upon the past before writing this letter to you, dear and unknown friend, in whom I have always found a strong, generous, and elevated soul.

"I must briefly remind you of the principal occurrences during the last four months, which have glided away so swiftly.

"When a man hopes, his life vanishes like a moment.

"At my first interview with my wife, I found her, I told you, as sincere and open as she was dignified and judicious.

"Notwithstanding, she felt deeply grateful towards me, Madame de Montbar, at that first meeting, did not pledge herself in any way, she made me

no promise; she merely said that in two or three days she would return me a definite answer; *it was quite natural, she wished to see the captain and consult with him.*

"I did not withhold from you, my friend, how much I was affected by the noble determination of M. Just Clement. His departure may have been decided on in concert with Regina; or he may have resigned himself to the measure without warning her of his design. I never knew which of these cases was the true one, nor did I ever inquire. Where would have been the use?

"Only this much I am certain of, because she told me so, that they have but once written to each other during these four months.

"When I visited my wife again to ask her what decision she had come to, she replied:—

"'I don't know, George, whether the attempt you are going to make will succeed. If I were to judge by what I feel at present, I would frankly tell you that your endeavour will be vain. But who can answer for the future? I am now under the dominion of a profound and exalted passion, which I need not blush for, because it has ever been unsullied; otherwise the trial you are about to undergo would be for both of us revolting. I have, therefore, no fixed resolution, George. I repeat it, if I may trust to my present feelings, the love I experience will be eternal. But admitting that, by some prodigy, you shall succeed to rekindle in my heart that tender affection of which I once gave you so many proofs, I shall still and for ever retain a sweet remembrance of a sentiment so elevated and so dear to me, and then I shall return to you and be for ever yours. For you know whether or not a woman of my character is likely to prize a legitimate passion. Try, then, George, to teach me to love you; and if you accomplish the miracle, I will cherish you doubly for having restored me by your love to those duties which it was your fault that I disallowed.'

"These were Regina's first words.

"True love carries about it so deep a faith, that on hearing my wife use this language to me, I did not doubt of the future.

"Nevertheless, my friend, I have told you with what prudent forethought I laid down the plan I purposed to follow.

"Too eager a tenderness would have shocked, and might have wounded the feelings of Regina. Her love for Just being the more moody and vigilant, that she dreaded it might decline; therefore, the better to allay her suspicion, I began by assuming the part rather of a friend or a brother, to that of a lover.

"I had likewise perfectly understood that, to win back her heart, other things were necessary besides protestations of love. To convince her of a sincere feeling was easy; but to induce her to partake in it! what care, what efforts were required?

"Consequently, in the first place, I resolved that my life should be as justly occupied as it had hitherto been vain and useless. The idea you had suggested to me returned, to turn my love of contrasts to account by venturing again into those foul dens, no longer out of mere curiosity, but with a sound and advantageous object. I did so. I wrote and told you from time to time of the intense interest I felt during those excursions thus directed.

"I shall never forget the surprise, the melting tenderness of Regina, when I related to her my first triumph of this nature. With what fervent delight she praised me.

"'It is right, it is noble,' said she, sensibly affected. You are now worthy of your name and rank.

"Regina's eyes shone: her face, always so pale this last month, was slightly coloured; it seemed to me that whilst she fixed her looks upon me, the cold placidity of her eye was not so manifest as usual.

"Then I said to her, in a voice almost tremulous,

"'Are you satisfied, Regina?'

"'Oh! yes; both satisfied and very happy, for'——

"'Then,' added I hesitatingly, lest I should go to fast, 'then, your hand.'

"'Willingly!' she replied very cordially.

"This seemed to me an unhoped for favour.

"I took her hand almost tremblingly; that charming hand which I was wont to kiss so lovingly heretofore, and I ventured to squeeze it.*

"Regina returned my grasp as frankly. But when I offered to detain her hand a moment in my own, I felt it in a manner grow cold, and freeze.

"I looked at my wife—she cast down her eyes; her face, at first so sweetly expanded, grew sad again.

"I knew the meaning of it.

"It was esteem and sympathy she wanted to testify—nothing more.

"Then I said to her, with a resignation that seemed to affect her,

"'Nothing yet, Regina?'

"'Nothing,' she answered.

"And two tears trickled down her cheeks.

"The blow was appalling. I had been too precipitate; I had roused her suspicion, which was being lulled to sleep. The labour of a whole month was lost—all my patience, resignation, and restraint, so difficult to practise, so painful to sustain, had been squandered.

"Then, my friend, I almost gave way to despair. I was on the point of giving up the task; but, fortunately, your friendship came to my relief, and once more I hearkened to your counsels.

"Upwards of two months had elapsed since that too precipitate attempt. Madame de Montbar behaved to me with affection: she took an interest in my pursuits, advised me with judicious wisdom, and sometimes allayed the violence of my opinions. But in spite of her affected composure and peace of mind, I often surprised her when sad and thoughtful. Her health was evidently changing, and the smile with which she received whatever I attempted to please her with, wore an aspect of so mournful a resignation as cut me to the soul.

"Her father would sometimes say to me,

"'You are full of attentions to my daughter. She returns your affection. Your attitude among men begins to be achieved, and is expanding every day; and yet a father's presentiments, which are seldom erroneous, assure me that there is some misunderstanding between you.

"I was obliged to reassure the baron, and I think I have partly succeeded.

"If I recall these facts to you, it is because whilst writing to you I wanted to remember them myself, in order to embrace at a single glance both past occurrences and present events.

"One day I was vain enough to imagine that Regina's sadness, and her altered health, arose from that sort of shame she felt to confess to me—that my love, though disdained in the first instance, was making more progress every day in her heart, and was likely to be completely restored to me.

"According to me, there was mingled with this revulsion in his sentiments for me, a generous compassion for Just, whom she was relinquishing on my account.

"And then, as ever since my first hasty attempt, I had always restricted myself to a display of friendship towards her, she had never had an opportunity to testify the change in her sentiments. Such acknowledgements, you know, are always extremely delicate.

* The simpleton! why did he not lock her up, and keep her on short commons, in the garret, for a week or two? A course of water gruel, or cold porridge, might have brought her to her senses. How fearfully ridiculous empty, and nonsensical, this letter is!—*Translator's note.*

"These thoughts once admitted, I found reasons enough to justify them, and to persevere in the belief.

"So, the affectionate but reserved manners of Regina—the prudence and discretion she showed in her choice of words when speaking to me of her esteem, of her friendship, her gratitude—all, in my mind, signified constraint, and superficial appearance; and, on the first fitting occasion, I expected the reality to burst forth.

"After much hesitation, I resolved to know my fate, whatever it might be; for I felt too weak to endure any further suspense.

CHAPTER X.

THE LETTER OF THE PRINCE OF MONTBAR CONTINUED.

"LATTERLY, my wife had appeared to me more agitated, more dejected, than usual, which I attributed to the oppressive weather of these days, since she has become so nervous and susceptible.

"Yesterday, I had gone into her parlour rather abruptly; however, she did not observe my entrance; and when I approached her, I saw her face bedewed with tears.

"I asked her what was the matter, she returned me no answer. I called out her name, she continued silent and thoughtful. At length I took her hand; a moment after she quickly withdrew it, looked at me surprised, and asked how long I had been there.

"She struggles in vain, thought I, against the overpowering feeling that is restoring her to me, and which she trembles to acknowledge.

"That evening, therefore, although the atmosphere was stormy and stifling, we went down into the garden. I had ordered them to serve coffee in a small rustic pavilion, surrounded by a thick shrubbery. This pavilion had been a favourite resort during our first happy days of love.

"We entered the pavilion. Regina sat down on a divan. She was dressed in white, and seemed no longer but the shadow of herself. She was so pale, so very colourless, that, in the dim twilight of the hour, her sweet and noble countenance could not be distinguished from the white garments she wore.

"Our conversation languished for a time, and almost without observing it, we had both sunk into a silent revery for some time.

"Regina seemed no longer to perceive my presence; her steadfast looks were fixed upon the tips of the lofty garden trees, above which a few stars had already begun to shine; her smile was extremely sad and sorrowful; she did not move, but bent lowly forward, and crossed over her lap her still lovely but wasted hands.

"At present, my friend, that my mind is no longer disturbed by fallacious visions, and that I really remember the countenance and attitude of Madame de Montbar, I am at a loss to conceive my fatal misconception.

"Poor woman! thought I at the time, I have done so much for her, that she has at length surrendered. She wants but one word from me to acknowledge the truth; she averts her eyes lest she might submit to the magnetic attraction of my look—her confusion, her moodiness, sufficiently bespeak that she is but making a last struggle with thoughts of love that assail her on every side. But night is coming on—a deep silence prevails—we are alone—alone in a place which reminds her of so many things. Never was there a more propitious occasion to allure the avowal her modesty forbids her to make.

"I then arose, and, kneeling by her side, took one of her hands within my own, without any resistance on her part.

"That burning meagre hand did I cover with kisses; and she returned my grasp with a fitful pressure.

"'Regina!' cried I in ecstacy, 'at last you are restored to me. You are my Regina of bygone days—you love me?'

"'Oh! yes. Whatever they may do, I love you still—I love you more ardently than ever; but I don't say so—I must not say so. I owe *him* so much. But never mind, this species of death is gentle and painless, my beloved Just. I die with thy image in my heart!'

"A heartrending shriek that was wrung from me, involuntarily awoke her from her wandering abstraction.

"She seemed to start out of a dream; she stood up, swept her hands over her brow, and said to me with a haggard look:

"'Have we been long together, George?'

"My tears were choking me; but, fortunately, the night had fallen. My wife did not perceive that I was weeping. I answered her:

"'Yes, some time; but it is growing late. Do you wish to go in?'

"'As you please, my friend,' she replied softly, without noticing the change in my voice.

* * * * * *

"I have broken off this letter, my friend, for it was too painful to be continued.

"You know all at present. I have but one thing to do—to set out to-morrow to restore her liberty to the afflicted woman.

"She is dying, and my blindness, my meanness, the cause.

"To-morrow, then, I shall go.

"Farewell! a last farewell, my dear unknown friend! Answer me immediately, though I know beforehand what your opinion will be. You cannot advise me to do otherwise than what I contemplate.

"GEORGE DE MONTBAR."

CHAPTER XI.

MARTIN'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

"3rd of July, 18—.

"ALL is over

"Since the beginning of last week, M. de Montbar has left home.

"This day, Just and Regina have met again for the first time.

"My mistress was still very pale—very much thinner; but still how beautiful she was! how beautiful in her love and happiness!

"My task is over. I have completed it uprightly and courageously. I may say so with pride.

"What shall I do?

"Henceforth, what need can the princess have of me?

"But as to myself, that habit of domestic intimacy, so sweet, so dear to my heart, in spite of the pain it sometimes produces, how can I break it off? To live away from Regina? to see her no more, at every moment in the day! especially now that she is so happy.

"Can I have the courage? Can I resist the melancholy satisfaction of saying to myself, whilst witnessing her happiness and Just's,

"'Of this felicity I was the cause? Those painful but necessary trials to hallow their loves, and save them from remorse, I it was that suggested them, for the sake of their tenderness?

"'Shall I quit Regina now, after so long beholding the afflictive sight of her misfortunes?

"'No, no. If any reward is due to me, it shall be mine to witness that happiness to which I contributed with all the might of my unknown devotion, and which must never be disclosed.

"No: for sometime forward, unless she dismisses me, I will not leave Regina.

"And if hereafter, that sweet and dangerous habit of living so near her is so incarnate within me that I cannot shake it off—if accustomed to look upon me as one of those good and faithful servants whom we never part with, she should one day say to me:

"'Martin! you will never leave me, will you?'

"How shall I refuse her? The desire of my heart will but echo the question.

"And then my life will be spent in barren domesticity—in selfish enjoyment, without any object to ennoble it; for at least, hitherto, this servitude has allowed me to render Regina those services which I could not have devoted to her cause in any other condition of life. But my task is ended. Raised above want by Doctor Clement's generosity, I cannot, ought not my life to have a more lofty, a more useful, a more profitable aim for the good of my poor brethren, as my noble benefactor used to express it.

"Come, no weakness; I will consult Claude Gerard. His masculine mind and affectionate spirit shall once more be my guide.

"Oh, let him be blest! for it is to him that I am indebted for having been enabled to apply to my humble state of life that maxim so often practised and repeated by him:—

"'There is no state of human life, however low and abject it may be, which a man of spirit cannot dignify by his actions.'"

THE END OF MARTIN'S MEMOIRS.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SURPRISE OF COUNT DURIVEAU.

HERE we must break off the narrative of Martin's Memoirs, to remind the reader of this book of the facts and events which took place after the arrest of Bete-Puante, the poacher, or rather of Claude Gerard, the village schoolmaster, to whom we think it proper to restore his real name.

Surprised on the margin of the pond, at the farm of the large juniper tree, by brigadier Beaucadet, who had lain in ambush with several of his men, near the ruins of the bakehouse, Claude Gerard and Martin had fallen into the hands of the gendarmes; when the count and his son, apprised by Beaucadet, had come to the place of arrest, in order to witness the fact that one of their male servants was going to hold a secret interview with Bete-Puante, charged with attempting to shoot Count Duriveau.

Moreover the reader will recollect, that having recognised in the poacher, Claude Gerard, a man whom he had twice before mortally injured, Scipio's father had chosen to show his scornful repudiation of the schoolmaster's advices, and in the actual presence of Claude Gerard, had given orders to expel Master Chervin and his wife from their wretched farm-house.

After that wicked piece of tyranny, Scipio and his father had returned in their carriage to the castle of Tremblay, whilst the soldiers were leading off Claude and Martin.

On his return home, the count, obedient to the hint he got from Beaucadet, thought it advisable to examine Martin's little bedroom, as grave suspicions attached to that servitor.

This examination proved fruitless at first, but the count having at length noticed a trunk which was locked, had broken it open, and had taken out a white box containing the "Memoirs of Martin," together with a letter to the king.

This correspondence of his valet with a king, having raised his curiosity to the utmost, count Duriveau had carried the manuscript into his own apartment, and had begun to read it, when the castle clock was striking one.

These were, as the reader already knows, the first lines of the Memoirs:

"I retain but a confused and imperfect idea of the events that occurred prior to my eight or ninth year. However, in respect to that obscure and bygone period, I still remember a young and lovely woman, whose flexible fingers were almost constantly employed with the distaffs of a lace frame, all dotted over with glittering brass pins; the sounding tingle of the distaffs used to delight me; I still fancy I hear it—but, at night, my admiration rose still higher. Stretched in my little bed, I used to see that young woman, working by the light of a candle, whose vivid flame was still enhanced by passing through the limpid water of a crystal globe. The sight of this luminous ray used to dazzle and delight me; and then I would fall asleep as I kept looking at it."

Even had not his curiosity been quickened by other motives, the lines we have here reproduced would have been sufficient to draw the count's attention to the narrative.

The young woman whom he had formerly seduced, was herself a lace-worker, like the young girl.

Her name was Perrine Martin, and the valet de chambre, whose history he was reading, was also named Martin.

Finally, the age of the latter, certain particulars of personal likeness, at first scarcely noticed by the count, but which his first surmises instantly recalled to his memory—all these circumstances put together, if they did not convince him that Martin was his son, made him entertain that hypothesis as probable.

It will be conceived from that moment with what avidity count Duriveau must have perused these singular Memoirs.

Then, after a few pages, he met the names of Bamboche and Basquine—the early companions of Martin.

CHAPTER XIII.

A PROPHECY.

Just as Count Duriveau was once more reading the foregoing lines, which terminated the episode of the Princess of Montbar and Martin's Memoirs, four o'clock was striking at the Castle of Tremblay.

The night, though serene at the beginning, had become stormy; the wind roared, the lofty park trees violently shaken by the gale, returned a dumb brushy sound like the prolonged rumble of the ocean. The count heard it from his bed-chamber, situated on the ground floor.

Thoughtful and deeply abstracted, and leaning his elbow on his desk, with his head resting on his hands, the count continued his reading and his meditations. Such was his mental occupation, that he did not perceive the noise of the grating of the lock of a door leading to his dressing-room.

Just as a new and heavy gush of wind shook the outside shutters, the door moved.

But it was only half opened.

Durivean took but little notice of the door, which he thought had merely yielded to the wind, for after turning his head a moment towards it, he lapsed again into his thoughts; his energetic countenance betrayed the struggle of the different feelings which were agitating his breast; but the expression of his features was especially marked by sentiments of generosity; twice he shook his head, whilst a smile of pity swept over his lips, in general so haughty and disdainful.

Then the door was opened to the full, but slowly, and the figure of Claude Gerard stood in the shadow.

The poacher's bare head was dripping wet, as was his coat of beast-skin. The black mire on his trousers, plainly told he had just crossed over the adjacent marshes and boggy soil.

Seeing the count busily engaged in reading, Claude Gerard eyed him in a manner that seemed to say: "I expected it would be so—I am come in time."

Then he moved up to the count without being heard by him, thanks to the thickness of the carpet, and laid his large hand on his shoulder.

The count leapt up in his chair, and turned round abruptly; but, at the sight of the poacher, he sat mute, petrified.

Before he had time to think, Claude Gerard snatched up the manuscript, and thrust it into his deep pocket, saying:

"Martin had dreaded this breach of trust, sir! I am come in good time!"

"You here!" cried the count; and, hastily rising, he ran to the fireplace and rang a bell.

"That bell only communicates with Martin's room, *and he is not there*, you know," said the poacher, coldly. "We are all alone here—shutters and doors fastened."

"Do you want to murder me, villain!" cried the count, looking about for some weapon of defence. "What are you come here for?"

"I am come to tell you, sir," resumed the poacher, in a sad, solemn tone of voice, "that Perrine Martin, the mother of your son, died last night."

"Dead! She!—Martin's mother!" cried the count.

"She died three hours ago," said Claude Gerard; "here, in one of your farm houses."

"Was she here?" muttered the count, thunderstruck. "Is she dead? Martin her son! Can it be true?"

"Yes. Martin is her son and yours. Yes, she is dead!" repeated Claude Gerard, with slow solemnity, as if wanting his words to penetrate into the depths of Duriveau's heart.

"No, no!" he cried; "it is a dream,—a frightful dream!"

"If it is a dream, sir," answered Claude, "the funeral bell, which will peal after dawn, will show you."

"Oh! that she should die at this moment," muttered the count, "when all my past life has been reflected before me."

"In the name of that past life—in that of your brave and afflicted son, I bid you repent. There is yet time!"

The count, ashamed and vexed to have allowed his feelings to be witnessed by Claude Gerard, armed himself to resist the generous sentiments he was giving way to, and exclaimed:

"Begone immediately!—not another word!"

"God will tire in the end," replied Claude Gerard. "Beware!"

"Begone!" cried the count, furiously.

"Hear me, I implore you!" resumed the poacher, "I am speaking to you without hatred or passion. There is the hand of Providence in all this. This very night your victim, Martin's mother, was breathing her last, whilst you were reading the life of that unhappy child and learning his character—learning thus to pity, and, I am sure, to love him. I tell you the hand of Providence is in it; and if you were so blind, so unfortunate, so desperate, not to prostrate yourself before that mysterious Providence, beware! A secret presentiment assures me you will be struck by some fearful blow!"

In spite of his pride and hardness of heart, the count started at the words of Claude Gerard, whose solemn voice, like that of a judge, bespoke only pity for the count as he uttered his prophecy.

"A fearful blow strike me?" said he, glancing around and then at the poacher. "That blow, no doubt, you mean to strike yourself, and thus fulfil your own prophecy."

"Are you not now in my power, and succourless?" cried Claude. "No, no, I am not thinking of vengeance! If you repent, it would be sinful and useless; if you persist in crime, then—I swear to you by the everlasting justice of God, in which I believe—a secret voice already tells me, that a more than human hand will punish you!"

At this, Duriveau thought of BASQUINE, and inwardly quaked.

"Ah!" cried he, "you take me for a poor credulous fool! You come here to talk to me about a dead woman and a bastard, and then everlasting justice! What a fool you are to report such nonsense to me. I tell you, Mr. Prophet, that justice is on my side, since the dead woman is in her coffin, and the bastard in prison!"

On hearing this execrable speech Claude Gerard made no answer, but glancing a look of pity and terror at the count, moved towards the door.

"Stop!" cried Duriveau, rushing upon the poacher: "if you escaped the gendarmes, you shall not escape me; and the bastard shall be overtaken, though it cost me a thousand Louis!"

Claude Gerard pushed off the count so rudely, that he stumbled over an elbow chair, whilst the poacher sprang into the dressing-room, locked the count in his bedroom, and then leaping out of the window, vanished through the trees in the park.

CHAPTER XIV.

BASQUINE'S HOTEL, AND A CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO FASHIONABLE SERVANTS.

The following scene takes place in a delightful little hotel, situated between a courtyard in front, and a garden behind, in the Rue Saint Lazare, inhabited by the famous actress Basquine. A part of the garden overlooks an empty piece of ground, covered with masonry and building materials.

It is ten o'clock in the morning: two persons who have figured in Martin's Memoirs, Mr. Leporello and Miss Astarte, are engaged settling and putting in order, the apartments which a party who continued late overnight, had as usual greatly confused.

Astarte, though some years older than when we formerly beheld her in the service of her *Ministress*, whom she was so fond of plaguing, has still retained her elegant shape, her beautiful white teeth, her magnificent black hair, and her pert saucy gamesome look.

Leporello, the former valet to the Baron of Saint Maurice, has acquired as much importance as he has lost of youth; he has become stouter, his face is fuller, ruddier, and he seems to be on the best possible terms with Astarte.

"Come now, my dear," said Leporello to her, interrupting his domestic occupation to stretch himself with careless ease in an elbow chair, and holding up his feather brush, "let us have a little chat, I want to practice my tongue a bit. Having come up the day before yesterday from Normandy, on your summons, and entered this service yesterday on your recommendation, being occupied a part of the night in announcing more dukes, princes, ambassadors, marquises, and earls, and other great people, than I ever had to call out before in the best houses I have served, I have not yet had time to talk to you seriously on the topic."

"True, my poor Leporello," said Astarte, extending herself in the position of a *danseuse*. "The last carriage drove off at four this morning; Madame kept me in her room till five, and I am just up."

"I am quite certain," returned Leporello, "that you never would have written to me to leave the old

Marchioness de Mainval, in order to let me lose by the bargain. Besides, my wages are almost doubled, and you represent the mistress as generous, and not over strict."

"Even to a fault—for with such confiding people, in spite of one's self, one becomes scrupulous, whilst, faith with others, we wage open war!"

"An actress generous?" said Leporello, "but no wonder; she spends her money as she earns it,—and it appears she earns it lumpishly."

"Upwards of 100,000 francs a year."

"Come," said Leporello sighing, "I must believe you."

"I will besides inform you of every thing. You know I left my stupid *Ministress* after the trick of the *radishes*."

"The radishes?"

"What? don't you know?"

"May I never chew one again (and I love them fondly), if I understand your meaning."

"Well! I was exhausted, sick and weary of my *Ministress*; for not satisfied with being a fool, she was as spiteful as a cat,—not to me of course; for I have beak and claws, but to a poor neice of hers, who was very plain, but as gentle as a lamb,—how she did worry the poor thing; and that so exasperated me, that I said to myself: I won't stay here, but I will revenge that poor girl before I leave, and I'll be turned away for some capital lark. So then one day, I had to dress the old Jezabel's hair for a ball at the Tuileries. I took half a dozen pretty little radishes with their leaves about them, stuck them with black pins, and planted them without her suspecting it, behind her tuft of hair."

"Astarte, you have the spirit of a Cambrone*!"

"The Ministress had besides, two white tufts in front. 'Ah! my pet,' said she to me, as she coquetted with her looking-glass, 'I am perfectly decked out to-night; you have surpassed yourself.'"

"Then the Marquis of Henneville, who was already playing the amiable with Miss Basquine, placed me here, and since then I have remained."

"I see through the manœuvre of that Marquis; he must have said to himself, 'Astarte will be in my interest; it's a good thing to win the chamber-maid, when you are courting the mistress.'"

"Generally, it is so; but he gained nothing by it. Poor fellow! what silly things he did to push his suit. He at length left his wife to please her, as he thought; and that was not all—he bought, at a ruinous price, a house close to this."

"What for?"

"To be near her."

"And there was nothing going on between them?"

"Nothing."

"He must have been mad!"

"Of course he was!' and that's how madame treats them all. The marquis was young, handsome, and brave, with very winning manners; but his love almost brutified him. Positively, Leporello, I swear to you the poor Marquis used to rend my heart. Sometimes he would break out into a passion, and make you shudder; and then he would weep like a child."

"And your mistress?"

"Like marble! colder still—for marble cannot laugh."

"Did she laugh?"

"Yes: as she can laugh at times; and then it chills your very blood."

"She must be the devil incarnate, our worthy mistress?"

"I fear so."

"But the Marquis?"

"Is dead."

"What! dead of love?"

"Of love, and a pistol-shot through his heart."

"Astarte, you are joking!"

"The thing was hushed up: they spoke of sudden apoplexy, but the real truth is he killed himself; and the proof is that Count Duriveau, one of his friends, found his body lying on the floor one morning when he called to see him. And, consequently, they say Count Duriveau has detested her ever since, and says all manner of wicked things against her, which does not prevent his son——"

"Count Duriveau's son? Has the viscount no better chance than the rest?"

"Umph!" cried Astarte.

"At last I breathe again."

"Not so fast, Leporello; no doubt madame *cares* for the viscount, and shows him more attention than I ever saw her pay before to any one of her former suitors. So that, since his departure for Salogne and his father's estate, she has written to him three or four times a week. Besides, I think she expects him every moment, since the double marriage of the father and son are to come off in Paris."

"What says she of the young viscount?"

"Nothing: and that's another thing to be noted; for when others are concerned, Leporello, I promise you, you could not hear her speak of any of them for ten minutes, whilst calling them her *patients*, without——"

"Making game of them?"

"No: without despising them. For she can so rally and degrade her admirers, that she brands them as with a red-hot iron."

"And still the simpletons adore and doat upon her?"

"What of Martin?"

"I believe he is still in the country.

"But to return to our mistress, do you know I think her very singular; and yet to see how well she does the honours of a party, she might be taken for a duchess; and then how lovely—how wonderfully beautiful! But yet——"

"Well, what more?"

"Is she always as pale, Astarte?"

"Always."

"She does not appear to be ill—she is none the less handsome; but still such paleness is singular."

"Between ourselves, Leporello," said Astarte, looking cautiously about her as she spoke, "I think its what she smokes that causes her paleness."

"Does she smoke? what she, too! It seems, then, positively the fashion, although the scent of a cigar about a woman is abominable. But, still, since it's the fashion——"

"You are mistaken, she does not smoke tobacco."

"What then?"

"I hardly know what it is; she lays it on a kind of porcelain shell—it looks like resin—she lights it and inhales the vapour by means of a long pipe twisted round with silk and gold threads."

"What pleasure can she derive from it?"

"It sets her to sleep."

"Sets her to sleep! why does she set herself to sleep, pray?"

"To forget."

"Does she fret, then?"

"Like the dead, like the dead, Leporello."

"She!—so rich, so beautiful, so admired, so flattered,—can she fret?"

"Like the dead, I tell you; and when she has smoked her opiate, she remains for six or seven hours stretched on her sofa with her eyes half closed, as still as any statue."

"What you tell me is scarcely credible!"

"Especially the last six months her *ennui* has been growing worse and worse. Formerly she used to sing for hours and hours, all alone, too; that appeared to divert her, although she would then frequently burst into tears; especially over one of her songs. The moment she began to sing it, she would weep like a Magdalen. But now it is upwards of three months since she opened her piano; and in-

* A famous French officer of the Old Guard, who performed prodigies of valour at Waterloo.

stead of availing herself of a *conge* she has of four months, to go and clear some fifty or sixty thousand franks they offer her in England,—she prefers staying here to smoke and lull herself to sleep."

"But when she sings at the theatre, when they throw flowers and wreathlets at her feet, and call her before the curtain!"

"Every body says that her last five performances were equal to any—she never played better—she was never more loudly applauded—she never looked so handsome—well! Whilst she was acting she still seemed rather animated; but, after her triumph, when she came home, she looked as dull and gloomy as if she had come from a funeral."

"Really, this is awful!"

"The last time they took the horses from her carriage, the whole orchestra, and I don't know how many men and women of the first fashion, accompanied her home."

"She could not have been dull that time, at all events."

"True, that was the only time I have seen her return in good spirits."

"Well! that makes one."

"At length, said she, '*it's for the last time.*'"

"How! for the last time; won't she perform any more?"

A violent pull at the bell sounding in the antechamber, broke off the conversation between Leperello and Astarte.

CHAPTER XV.

AN EARLY FRIEND RETURNS TO SEE BASQUINE.

LEPORELLO went and opened the door. The porter, with looks of consternation, put his head in, saying:

"Is Miss Astarte within?"

"What for?"

"I must speak to her directly," said the porter.

"Oh! my God; I'm all upset by it."

"What's the matter, Monsieur Durand?" said Astarte, entering hurriedly.

"Oh! Miss—only fancy, that just now somebody knocks at the door; I pull the string, and I saw come into my box a tall fellow with a black beard and iron-gray hair, although young-looking still: in other respects not badly dressed, but queerish like in his face, and with a large black patch over his left eye. In a word,—such a face, such a face!"

"Go on," said Astarte, impatiently, "finish your story."

"'Does *Basquine* live here?' said the fellow in a gruff voice.

"'Yes, *Miss* Basquine does live here, sir,' answered I to the ungainly boor, to show him how uncivil I thought him. 'Good,' returns he, and thereupon he begins striding through the yard. I sprang out after him. 'Sir, wait a bit; you can't go in that way; the lady is not visible.' 'The proof that she is visible, is that I am about to see her,' answered he. And on he goes again. Then, indeed, I took him by the arm, and cried out: 'If you mean to force your way into the house, I shall call the watch directly.' At this threat the devil of a man changed colour; I noticed that—he stopped short and said to me: 'Come, do n't make so much noise. Let us return into your lodge. You will give me pen, ink and paper, and I will write a note, which you shall deliver to your mistress, and you will then see what she will say to you for refusing to admit me.' Zounds! the man said it so fiercely, that, in spite of his ugly phiz, I feared I had done wrong in not receiving him. He is waiting in my lodge, and here's the note he wants delivered to madam."

So saying, the porter gave Astarte a note recently sealed.

"Impossible," said the chambermaid, "I cannot wake madam; she only went to bed at five o'clock this morning, and her bell has not yet rung."

"Parbleu! send him to Jericho, your fellow with a beard," said Leperello. "Shall I go and talk to him?"

"No," resumed Astarte, after a few minutes' reflection, "Durand may have been right after all, and I will venture to wake her and give her the note."

Astarte then went to her mistress.

* * * *

Ten minutes later, Astarte came running back.

"Lackaday! what a lucky thought was mine," said she to Leperello, "to take in the letter."

Then turning to the porter:

"Quick, quick, Monsieur Durand, beg the gentleman to walk in, and do you bring him here."

The porter eagerly obeyed, and soon after returned, ushering in our old acquaintance Bamboche.

We must remind the reader that the bandit, accused of two murders, and hunted from forest to forest after his escape from the prison at Burgos, had been nearly taken by Beaucadet and his gendarmes, in a wood belonging to Count Duriveau; but meeting M. Dumolard, he had stripped him of his garments, his horse, and purse containing fifty-five louis. By means of that sum, Bamboche, after many painful chances, had succeeded in baffling the police who were on his heels, and reached Paris, where he naturally expected to lie much closer. At length he remembered Basquine, and knowing how splendid her fortunes had become, he hoped his early friend would assist him.

Bamboche, whose thick bushy beard nearly overgrew his face, and whose patch over his left eye still further disguised him, was respectably attired; but his coarse features and his wild countenance fully explained the porter's reluctance to introduce such a person to his mistress.

"Sir, will you step this way?" said Astarte to Bamboche, scanning him with a mixture of curiosity, and alarm, and surprise, for she could not account for the eagerness her mistress exhibited in admitting such a visitor.

* * * *

* * *

An hour after Bamboche's entrance into the hotel, Astarte returned to Leporello, saying with amazement:

"Oh, my God! here's another go!"

"What, my dear?"

"The man with the black patch is going to breakfast here."

"Pshaw!"

"He is to dine here."

"Pshaw!"

"To sleep here."

"Zounds!"

"And to lodge here."

"Then he must be a brother, at least?"

"Hush!" said Astarte, with a significant look and whispering.

"What now?"

"He is a political prisoner who has made his escape out of prison, where he had been committed after the riots."

"Oh! now I understand—poor fellow."

"Madam charges us to be very cautious. We two alone are to know that the prisoner is here. He is to sleep in the chamber on the far side of the laundry, overlooking the garden. I have got the key of the room; you are to carry him his victuals."

"Very well. But the porter who saw him enter just now?"

"That has been thought of. You will send the porter with this letter to Viscount Scipio, and whilst Durand is gone on this errand, you will stay

in his lodge, and when he returns, you of course will be supposed to have let out the man with the patch over his left eye."

"Capital! But is Viscount Scipio returned to Paris?"

"Undoubtedly. I knew his writing again this morning among the letters that I carried in to our mistress, when she rang to inform me that the man with the patch was to lodge here. The viscount is very surely in Paris, for madam bids me tell you that she is absolutely at home to nobody else; and he is to call about three."

"Good, I will give the pass-word to the porter, and will let nobody in save Viscount Scipio. But now I think of it, I have never seen him."

"No mattor, the porter knows him; he will let no visitor up but him: so you may open the door without any misgivings as to the viscount."

"Nevertheless, to satisfy myself, before introducing him I will ask him his name."

"At all events," said Astarte, "this is his portrait: the prettiest face imaginable, chesnut hair, small white curly mustachoes, large dark eyes, and pearly teeth."

"The devil! you seem to have noted him very well, the pretty viscount."

"And to finish the picture," said Astarte with a shrug, "neither too tall nor too short; a very fine shape, and a most elegant deportment."

"With all these advantages," said Leporello, "I do n't wonder that madam should care for him, as you say; and if I were my mistress, I should prefer to be set asleep by so pretty a fellow instead of her porcelain pipe."

"Hold your tongue, you very naughty man. Come, make haste to the porter, whilst I run to look after the hiding-place for the man with the patch over his eye."

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About three o'clock, Leporello introduced Viscount Scipio Duriveau into Basquine's drawing-room.

"If the viscount will have the goodness to wait a moment," said Leporello, "madam will be here."

Scipio nodded, Leporello went out.

Whilst the viscount was waiting for Basquine, she was completing her toilet, assisted by Astarte. Several dresses, of different colours and fashions, scattered over the chairs, showed that Basquine had tried on more than one, before fixing her choice on a particular dress, which she intended to be irresistible.

The chamber-woman hearing a slight tap at the bed-room door, called out:

"Who's there?"

Leporello answered from without:—"Viscount Scipio Duriveau is waiting for madam, and here is a letter just come."

Astarte half opened the door, and took in the letter. She gave it to her mistress.

Basquine had scarcely opened the letter, before she exclaimed: "he too at Paris?"

This letter was from Martin, who had escaped from Beaucadet and his gendarmes, and announced his intention of calling upon Basquine in the course of the day.

"Don't forget, I beg you, Astarte, the instructions I gave you respecting the person who is to remain here in concealment," said she, as she was going out.

"Madam may rely on my discretion," replied the chamber attendant.

So saying, she crossed through a room adjoining the bed-chamber, and soon appeared to the viscount.

A flash of infernal joy shot from her eye—she felt the moment was approaching to satiate her long enduring appetite for revenge. Scipio did not observe that malignant and ominous expression. Far otherwise—for though he was accustomed to Basquine's dazzling beauty, never had it appeared to him so wonderfully, so voluptuously attractive. As she drew nearer, he quivered with love and desire, exclaiming in a tone of exultation—

"I have won the game! my father will come to-morrow—you shall dictate the conditions of my marriage with Raphaela."

"Ah! demon," said Basquine, flinging herself round his neck, and encircling him in her lovely arms.

"Are you satisfied, rosy sprite?" returned the viscount, spanning his fine shapely waist within his ten fingers, whilst his lips sought her own; but she eluded the kiss, and though still detained by Scipio, she fell back on one side, and bent herself in two over one of his arms; then, reclining in that posture like the provoking figure of the antique Erigone, she half-closed her sweet and dying eyes, and rivetted them on his—whilst her ruby lips, exhaling a lacivious sigh, partly opened to disclose the white enamel of her teeth.

A mist passed over Scipio's looks; his cheeks reddened and glowed; intoxicated, bewildered, and hanging towards the syren, he said to her in a tremulous voice:

"How lovely you are! I adore you! At length you are mine!"

But hardly had he uttered these words, before Basquine, alert and nimble as an adder, slipped from his ardent embrace, saying as if she reproached herself for having yielded to her feelings,

"No, no; I am too fond."

Then she threw herself into an arm-chair at the chimney corner, and buried her face in her hands.

Scipio ran to her exclaiming:

"You must not deny me—you love me—you are mine, mine!—and now—"

But he could say no more; for, raising her head, Basquine laughed outright with satanic derision.

"Oh, this is dreadful! for ever the same!"—cried the viscount with bitter chagrin; although he had faith in the sincerity of the first emotion he had witnessed.—"Just now, you listened to your heart; and suddenly to trifle with my feelings, you resume the mask—even in your love you cannot be any thing else but an actress."

"And you,—are you not the greatest rake; that is, the greatest of actors? How do I know that *your father will come?* How do I know but this may be a feint to seduce a poor weak girl who is too ingenuous to hide her love?"

"My father will visit you to-morrow! I swear it!" exclaimed he.

Here Scipio was interrupted,

For at that moment, and in spite of his mistress's express prohibition not to admit any body, Leporello, after tapping at the door, came into the saloon, carrying a letter on a plateau.

This letter was one from Count Duriveau himself, who was waiting in the ante-room.

CHAPTER XVI.

BASQUINE AT HOME.

GREATLY surprised at the sight of Leporello, Basquine said to him:

"I told you I would not be disturbed. What do you want?"

"It's a letter to be delivered directly," answered the servant; "and I have ventured to bring it."

"Give me the letter," said she, taking it.

She blushed, and then added:

"Let the party who gave you this letter come in."

Leporello withdrew.

"There 's no being alone with you," said Scipio stamping.

"Quick, quick!" cried the girl, rising and opening a small closet adjoining the saloon. "Go in there."

"I!" said Scipio astounded. "Why so?"

"Would you be present during my interview with your father?"

"My father!"

"This letter is from him, and he wishes to see me instantly."

"Oh! now you will believe me," cried Scipio, with a look of exulting pride; and he attempted to entwine her in his arms.

"You are the veriest devil in the world," said Basquine, pushing him gently into the closet, "to have brought your father to this desperate measure, is wonderful—surprising!"

"I have kept my word," cried Scipio, his eyes flashing, his cheeks on fire; and now it is your turn, Basquine."

"And am I not still more anxious to do so, naughty man?" muttered she, with her lips so close as to touch his face. "But stay, hide yourself—your father comes."

She had but closed the door on Scipio when Count Duriveau was ushered in by Leporello.

The count's face wore a look so serious, haughty, and harsh, that Basquine saw directly he concealed some after-thought beneath the condescension he now manifested by submitting to the wilful audacity of his son.

The count, far from being struck by the dazzling beauty of Basquine, could not help shuddering when he beheld her; for he remembered the hell-born hatred she had sworn against Scipio and those of *his* race, described in Martin's Memoirs.

Basquine glanced imperceptibly at the closet-door, where Scipio was then concealed, pointed to a chair, and said to the count very composedly:—

"Have the goodness to be seated, sir."

The count did not take a seat, but went up to the fireside, and, looking down haughtily upon Basquine, said to her:

"You, doubtless, expected my visit, madame?"

"Truly, sir, I hoped to have that pleasure."

"Let us understand each other, madame," said the count sharply. "I wanted my son to marry Miss Wilson, and he declared to me yesterday that he would not consent to the marriage, unless I, his father, came here to consult with you."

"Why, yes, sir," said Basquine, in a tone of superb derision, "I had that presumption."

"Indeed!" resumed Duriveau, scarcely containing himself. "So you hope to lay your conditions on me?"

"Undoubtedly, sir! and you come so graciously to inquire about them, that I feel the sincerest pleasure in communicating them to you. These are they. In the first place I ——"

"Enough, madame!" cried the count, "enough!" Since you deem me so base a coward as to descend to such ignominy, I make haste to undeceive you."

"In that case, sir, though I fully appreciate the honour of your visit, may I beg to know to what I owe that favour?"

The count, overawed by the ironical composure of Basquine, was at great pains to preserve his own tranquil mien.

"In order to explain to you the real object of my visit, madame, I must go back to prior events. I was the intimate friend of a man whom you drove to despair—to death—to a dreadful extremity, such as you probably intend for my son."

"I never repent myself," replied Basquine, with cutting raillery.

"I never doubted, madame, the fertility of your imagination. I say, then, I was the friend of one of your victims—the Marquis of Henneville."

"You mean to signify that you are my enemy?" resumed she.

"Your most implacable enemy, madame."

"I admire your candour."

"What you may less admire, perhaps, is to be told—that I know with what bitter and savage hatred you pursue my son. That hatred," added the count, raising his voice in order to be overheard by Scipio, whose retreat he suspected—"that hatred goes back many years."

"It goes back to my childhood, does it not?" said Basquine carelessly. "The beggar-child in the Forest of Chantilly—the little singer at Sceaur—the poor figurante at the Funambules, was myself—still myself. Is that your terrible secret?"

The count was disconcerted. He had expected to crush Basquine under the weight of this revelation.

"Come, noble count, come; do not derogate thus, to put on the manners of the citizen! Become once again that sceptical and sprightly young father, who so gallantly bred up his son, as the Duke of Richelieu formerly brought up M. de Fronsac."

"What have we to do with either the Duke of Richelieu or his son? I am not a mighty lord. My own father was a rich innkeeper who had saved money, and my son is his grandson."

"What matter! In your family, nobility, instead of ascending, descends, that's all; but, for pity's sake, do not again commit yourself to these vulgar citizen-vagaries."

"I cannot accede to your request, madam," replied the count, almost thrown out of his saddle by this insolent suavity. "My son may have fancied himself the son of a mighty lord, and so may I; but," added the count gravely, "I have recently awoke from my error, and I undertake to rouse my son—suddenly enough it may be; but I will atone for that by the soothing charm of a good and suitable marriage."

"Will Scipio consent?"

"Yes, madame."

"I doubt it."

"But I am certain."

"You probably possess, sir, some magic talisman—some wonderful love-charm?"

"Yes, and here it is," said the count, drawing out a paper and showing it to her."

"And to what good spirit do you owe this inestimable talisman?"

"Only to a magistrate."

"A magistrate," inquired she.

"Why, yes. I went and opened myself to a magistrate, and told him of the serious alarm I felt for his prospects, and what shameless faults he had been guilty of at the instigation of an execrable wench; then, availing myself of my paternal rights, I obtained from the magistrate a full legal authority to send my son to prison. Now, then, if he refuses to obey me submissively in all things, to-day or to-morrow, or at any time, he shall be committed to a house of correction."

At this unexpected blow Basquine started; but instantly recovering her caustic steadiness, she added:

"Your game is well played, I must admit, sir. Scipio is not able to compete with you."

"You see, madame," replied the count, triumphantly, "I was right when I said I would rescue my son from you in spite of him, and in spite of you."

"You told me likewise that these marriages——"

"Should come off together. Certainly; and still thanks to my talisman, for he must either give his consent or go to jail. At any rate, whether he marries or not, I shall marry; and since you quoted the name of the Duke of Richelieu, I will say to my son what he said to M. de Fronsac."

"And, pray, what was it, sir?"

"'Monsieur de Fronsac,' said he, 'I am going to get married in hopes of one day having a son, who shall not at all resemble you.'"

"Better and better! Once more, sir, poor Scipio cannot compete with so strong an adversary. But, now, will you inform me of your motive in visiting

me. I cannot suppose you are come here merely to show your skill and glorify yourself."

"Truly, madam, it required a strong motive to bring me here."

"And that motive, sir?"

"Madam," resumed the count, "my son is here."

"Sir!" said she, feigning astonishment.

"I tell you that he is here."

"But, sir."

"He is there," said Duriveau, pointing to the closet; "there, I am certain of it."

"Yes, he is there," said Basquine, whispering, and with simulated looks of fright. "But, hush! he may have overheard you."

"I spoke aloud purposely that he might hear me," replied the count, making a step towards the door. "I knew all along he was there."

"Sir!" exclaimed Basquine, throwing herself in the count's way, and with looks of increasing dismay. "Scipio must be deeply incensed."

"Indeed!"

"Take care, sir."

"Let me open that door."

"Oh! sir—stop!" said Basquine, clasping her hands. "Stop!"

"Madam, do not hinder me."

"Sir, for pity's sake!"

Just then the closet was opened suddenly, and Scipio appeared.

He stood a moment on the sill, as if to suppress the terrible resentment he felt on seeing his father.

"At length they are in presence," said Basquine to herself, darting a look of ferocious joy at the father and the son,—Scipio with his heart full of hatred and irrepressible rebellion, and his father with his mouth full of threats and triumphant taunts. "Now for my long-desired revenge! They are both at my mercy!"

CHAPTER XVII.

SCIPIO AND THE COUNT.

Scipio, after continuing a moment silent and immoveable at the closet door, stepped slowly out into the drawing-room: his features were ghastly white, and contracted with terrific passion, hatred, and rebellion against his father, on whom he fixed a look of awful defiance.

"So, you knew I was there?" said he: "and therefore it was you spoke so loud."

"Precisely so," said the count in a rigid inflexible voice. Then turning to Basquine:

"This was my reason, madame. When I overcame the repugnance I felt to have an interview with you, I knew my son was with you, and now before you I am glad to give him the rude lesson which, with the help of my firmness, will be doubly profitable to him."

"I did not lose any one of your words, sir," returned Scipio in a hollow voice, "and I shall remember."

"I will undertake, if need be, to refresh your memory;" said Duriveau, and remind you, if requisite, that it was before this woman that I made you resume the yoke of my authority; before this woman, who despises you, who mocks you probably more than she hates you, that I inflicted upon you this wholesome correction."

"And what may the object of this grand correction be, that you in your fatherly affection mean to afflict, sir," said Scipio.

"As the kindest language," continued the count, "the most tender entreaties, were not enough to conquer your insolent resistance——"

"Oh! the scene of the tender father," said Scipio tittering: "I told you about it, my dear—the effect was only so so; the gentleman having long made me aware that he had practised ready tears."

The count proceeded:

"Only one course was left for me—to wound you in your pride; so I resolved to humble it sir, and lower it so much, that you should blush even before this woman, and she should even blush for you. Now I defy your levity to stand up after this fall: you, the rake, the despiser of every body and every thing; here you are, reduced by paternal authority to your lawful proportions; a boy half rebellious, half crazy, who is first chastised and afterwards cured."

"Sir," exclaimed Basquine, "beware what you do: this language is very unfeeling."

"Let him rail, my dear;" resumed Scipio, "the scene is amusing; I have my own thought and resolution ready. However there is a spice of hypocrisy about this farce, which gives a new aspect to his paternal authority; for this very morning, the gentleman was playing the good and reckless companion with me; whilst he had the order to commit me in his pocket. We have had before *the wild father*, the *savage father*, the *tender father*, and now we are to have the *hypocritical father*. Even yesterday, he said to me; 'come young scapegrace, since it must be so, I will call on Basquine; but don't mention it to Mrs. Wilson.' Besides, I don't wonder at it, for the proverb says; 'like father like son.' The son of the rich usurer acts like his worthy father, when he would catch a restive debtor whose writ was in his pocket."

"Ridiculous comparison," said the count with congealing calmness, "when we want to shut a madman up, we take care not to warn him beforehand."

"A good apology, truly," exclaimed Scipio, laughing ironically. "Our respectable father is putting on the livery of a madhouse keeper."

"I expected this insolence; it was one of the looked-for results of the lesson I intended to give you. One last word: if I had not the means of rescuing you to-day, by and by, from the toils of this creature, I might tell you again that she is sworn to be revenged on you as she has been already on others, for all the shame and merited outrages with which she has been saturated since her infancy; for at nine or ten years old, prostitution, vagrancy and theft were habitual to her—to this illustrious actress, whose horses are now unyoked that she may be drawn in triumph."

"Ah, sir! pity my childhood at least," said Basquine, hiding her face, as if crushed by the reproach.

"Enough—enough, sir," cried Scipio.

"Foolish boy!" said his father; "perhaps you think I have wounded her feelings. Cheer up; the precocious habit of depravity and shame have indurated her heart; I tell her so to her face before you, that she may know I defy her hatred as I would a viper underneath my feet. Yes, now that I have you in my power, I dare her to injure either of us. As a proof of my sincerity I leave you together, for I suppose you do not wish to leave this house along with me."

"Very true," said Scipio. "In spite of the new claims to affection and respect your fatherly tenderness has inspired me with, I will humbly beg leave to remain with this lady. You may guess that when once you are gone, we shall have something to say on your score."

"Rightly urged," said Duriveau taking his hat.

"Really," said Scipio, "are you then going without commanding me *in the king's name* to follow you?"

"It is quite unnecessary," said the count moving to the door. "I shall give you till six this evening to make up your mind."

"But in the meantime, are you not afraid I may escape?"

"Not in the least."

"What! you don't even require my parole as prisoner?" said Scipio, tittering.

"I do n't need your parole," answered the count, laying his hand on the latchet of the door. "Down yonder, at the street gate, two policemen are waiting for you."

Scipio could not suppress a sort of start, partly from astonishment, partly through vexation. Then stooping to light a cigar at the hearth, so as to hide his confusion, he stood up again and replied:

"You are very cautious, sir, but not quite so inventive. This bright idea of the policemen has been suggested by grandpapa, the usurer, who used to go surrounded by them, like the barons of old with their men-at-arms."

"The comparison is a just one, for those two officers have orders to follow you every where, and in certain cases to arrest you on the spot."

Then turning to Basquine, the count continued:

"I leave you, madame, and quit your house without any misgivings as to any thing you may attempt against myself or my son. I presume I could not say any thing more likely to mortify you."

"True, sir," replied Basquine, "I see how inveterate my hatred is against you—I have sinned—and, repent—it was my fault, and a great one; and believe me, sir, I know how to appreciate your mode of exercising a father's authority. There is something so convincing in your eloquence, supported by constables, with the prison in the foreground, that I make no doubt whatever your son will bow submissively, as in duty he ought, to your unlimited authority."

"Speak for yourself, my dear," cried Scipio, giving loose to his passion, which he could no longer subdue.—"As for me, I bow down to no man, and whenever any one insults me—I resent it."

The count was going out, he stopped short, faced about, scanned his son with a scornful eye from head to foot, saying;

"You spoke of resentment, I think?"

"Yes—I spoke of it; and will do more than that," exclaimed Scipio furiously.—"Ah! you think, sir, you can upbraid me with impunity, in the way you did? What! you expect then, that at any given time, a single whim of yours will turn me into a respectful son, and you into a respectable father?"

Count Duriveau seemed about to reply, but restrained himself. Scipio proceeded with still kindling wrath:

"So then, you that have adopted me as the witness of your amours, and as the confidant of your wild sports and frolics. You that have taught me to scoff and laugh at every thing on earth—beginning with your own dignity, which you yourself set up as a target for our jests and sarcasms. And now within one little week, because the interest of your conjugal fury requires it, you are pleased to take up seriously the character of a father. It is pitiful! You talk of the respect I owe you? You have no longer any right to pretend to it, sir, since the day we quaffed out of the same glass the wine of the revel, and exchanged concubines with each other."

At these terrific words, Duriveau, thunderstricken, bent down his head with confusion.

"Have you forgotten that supper?" rejoined Scipio, exulting in his father's shame, "when you swapped your dark Sidonia for my fair Zephirina?—you even complained that you lost by the bargain. But no more of this recapitulation, sir,—only beware, you are playing with me a most desperate game! We are no longer to consider ourselves as father and son, but as two old roving blades, turned to deadly enemies: because one has played off a shameful trick upon the other.—Once more I tell you, sir, I will resent that trick, in spite of your constables, your prison, or even your curse, should you dare to bestow it seriously upon me, instead of laughing as you did on a prior occasion, when you said:—*I curse you, my unworthy son—for falling under the table at the fifth bottle*—and now, sir, this lady and I do not wish to detain you."

The count, who had changed colour repeatedly whilst Scipio was speaking with such profane audacity—returned no answer, but pulled out his watch and looked at it, coldly observing to his son:

"It is three o'clock—I command you to be home by six—and if not, I declare to you I will have you. But never mind, there is a way to subdue an obstinate schoolboy, you know. So then, at six o'clock, remember."

Thereupon the count withdrew, leaving Scipio and Basquine together.

On leaving the house, Duriveau before he stepped into his carriage, which had drawn up behind Scipio's cabriolet, beckoned to a couple of shabby square-built fellows, with huge knobby sticks in their hands, and gave them some private instructions in a low voice.

"Depend upon us;" replied one, "we know our customer, your son shall be handled as delicately as a lady going to Saint Lazare against her inclination he shall have no reason to complain of our behaviour."

"Good!" cried the count as he drove rapidly away.

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After Count Duriveau's departure, Basquine and Scipio were silent for some time.

Basquine watched with greedy eyes the terrible expression of rebellion and deep hatred she perceived in the viscount's face.

"Oh! I will be revenged!" he cried, extending his clenched fist towards the door by which his father had disappeared. "Oh, yes—I will be revenged!—I have already been revenged, for he could hardly contain his fury. Every one of my words went home!"

"Oh, words—and nothing but words. Such is your revenge—empty, frivolous words!" said Basquine, derisively; "a fine sort of revenge, truly! As if any words, however harsh or ignominious, could ever repay the affronts that man has loaded you with. When you issue from this house you will be pounced upon by constables!"

"If they lay hands on me, I will kill them!" exclaimed Scipio.

"Not you," replied Basquine; "they will arrest you, and drag you to your father like a refractory schoolboy!"

"Basquine, you drive me mad!" cried he, stamping furiously.

"How that man railed, insulted, and abused you! Were I, as he pretends, your most deadly foe, I could not wish you a more shameful, a more pitiful defeat than you have just suffered at his hands."

"One would think I had prostrated myself before him," cried Scipio; "whereas you saw yourself how he blushed and grew pale by turns, beneath the torture of my sarcasms."

"What does he care for such empty taunts?" returned the girl. "He has the game in his hands—he compels you to stoop—you struggle in vain! he has you in his power! You must submit to him as tamely as a child, otherwise you will be hurried off to prison. Only fancy the sensation in Paris, at your club;—among your friends and enemies, what glee, what mockery and scoffing! The brilliant Scipio, the jaded libertine, the rake, the most intrepid of the band, imprisoned like a dunce! Nay, believe me, you must not attempt to wrestle with your father—you would be smashed like a glass, by a man of that stamp."

"You too!" cried Scipio, bitterly; "you, too, load me with abuse?"

"Indeed!" cried Basquine, assuming a feigned

indignation. "And were you the only sufferer by those insults? Did he not treat me likewise with the most insolent contempt? Did he not force me, as he said—and that it is which provokes me so fiercely—did he not force me to blush for you?"

"Blush for me!" cried Scipio, "what you?"

"What then have you done that I ought to be proud of? Is it from the depths of your prison you will avenge us both? or, falling on your knees to your father, shall you consent to marry Raphaela?"

"To rail at me at such a moment," cried Scipio; "have you, then, no feeling?"

"I have no feeling for one who has suffered himself to be duped and baffled by that man; and am weak enough to resent as bitterly—nay, more bitterly than you—the shameful attitude you are reduced to take. After all, I should not grieve by any means, did I not love you."

"But what would you urge me to against him?"

"How can I tell? You should have been more skilful, more vigilant and rakish than that man, who has most scandalously tricked you, and rendered you supremely ridiculous."

Scipio lifted both his clenched hands to heaven with a look of silent rage there is no describing.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A MOST DREADFUL PLOT.

Basquine continued:

"Yes, I have no feeling; because, instead of finding in you the lover I had so long looked for in my dreams of fancy—that delightful demon, so bold and reckless, with whom I could have laughed between two kisses at all those silly fools, who deceived by the mask I have put on, revere me, yoke themselves to my carriage, or kill themselves for my sake—who would laugh with me at those pious ladies of rank who guarantee my virtue—who would laugh at every one and at every thing—make yourself the butt for the derision of the world, and especially of that man. You ought to have set my spirit thus on fire; for, God help me! I begin to think, poor innocent, that you were not in earnest. You ought not to have led me to imagine I had won the heart of a haughty Don Juan with a pale face; a fearless and charming libertine; who now suddenly relapses into a mere pitiful youth—a white-livered boy, whom his father has rebuked in my own house, and who is to be carried home by the police!"

"May the thunder fall upon and crush me, if I am not ready to do any thing to be revenged!" cried Scipio, with terrific wrath. "But to fight, I require a weapon, and I have none about me."

Basquine's eyes seemed to glisten with unearthly fire, but she resumed with her wonted irony,

"You are right; vengeance is not always at command. So, as times are urgent, why marry Raphaela; you will make her an excellent husband. Let us part for ever! You are impotent to avenge our common injuries, so you had better forgive them. It will show a better heart, and be more easy to accomplish—more prudent, my dear Scipio," added Basquine in a tone of contemptuous pity, which served to exasperate the viscount a hundred times more than all the fury of his resentful feelings against his father. "I tell you candidly, you are not strong enough to contend with the count."

"Any more!"

"Yes; I feel now it is my duty, as a *friend*, to point out the dangers to which, in the thoughtless pride of my love, I might have exposed you, had you been my lover."

"What mean you?"

"My poor boy! to give you an idea of my pride—my silly, monstrous, infernal pride—I will confess, that if I had a lover who was a gambler, I should despise him if he lost at play. By that you may judge me."

"But, still——"

"I have already told you repeatedly that you are far too weak to contend with your father: I will cite one instance, among many, of his diabolical spirit, and his admirable boldness."

"There, you are praising him now!" said Scipio, with a burst of desperate laughter.

"I can admire energy, spirit, and real courage, even in an enemy; you may judge, therefore, how much I should adore them in my lover."

"Basquine, my father told the truth," said Scipio, in a hollow voice. "You do, indeed, hate me with a vengeance."

"Believe it if you will, credulous boy! and that man's triumph will then be perfect; but at present, hatred, distrust, or love from you, does not matter to me. Allow me to tell you the story I alluded to—who knows? perhaps it may give you a useful hint," said the girl, laying a stress upon the words.

Then she resumed:

"Have you ever heard of the beautiful princess of Montbar?"

"Yes," returned Scipio, looking surprised at Basquine; "my father wanted, I believe, to marry her; but what connexion is there between her and the present case?"

"Your father loved her most passionately," said Basquine, not heeding the viscount's question; "and the princess despised him. Your father swore he would be revenged. Now the count, my poor Scipio, when he wishes to resent an affront, does not long wait for an occasion, or for a good one either."

"That's right—praise him again."

"I can't help doing so, for no other man would have dared to do what he did."

"Zounds!" cried the viscount, irritated to the utmost, "what did he do?"

"During a year at least, the count hid his game with regard to the princess," continued Basquine; "then he hired an empty house,—installed a mock invalid in a wretched and lonely apartment. The princess was very charitable;—she was dexterously allured, all alone, to that house, on the ostensible pretence of almsgiving to the mock invalid—and Madam de Montbar thus fell into your father's power; and the count was revenged on a woman who had insolently disdained him."

Scipio appeared to collect his thoughts, but without answering.

Basquine continued:

"That's what your father is capable of doing; and when a man displays so much vigour and obstinacy in his resentments, you will admit he has a right to look upon it as mere pastime when he resolves to break in a *restive scholar*, as he said."

"Yes; it must have been so!" exclaimed Scipio, mustering his recollections; for it was about that period that he fought a duel with Captain Clement, who has since married the princess. The motive of this duel had always appeared improbable. It must have originated with this adventure—and——

Suddenly Basquine broke out into a peal of laughter, exclaiming:

"What a good idea——"

"What is it?" said Scipio.

"Ah! my poor lad, I have got a more inventive head than you."

"How so?"

"You are looking for a weapon—you wish for revenge? I have just lighted on a capital one—so full of devilry——"

"What are you driving at——"

"But, pshaw! you are not bold enough to do it. It would require the same, *absolutely* the same boldness; the same energy as your father has; and you have not been moulded in that frame of iron."

"Silence!" roared the viscount, with a satanic

scowl. "I don't know what horrible thoughts I might not be led to harbour by means of such taunts."

"It would be a certain,—a dreadful revenge," said Basquine. "Yes; a terrible one; for your father's heart is now set upon marrying Mrs. Wilson; but after this your father would no longer wish to marry——"

"What!"

"Yes: I know an inevitable means of preventing your father's marriage; and then what frightful despair! what horrible torture for that man! He it would be who should say, 'the marriage is impossible!'"

"Oh! if this could be!" cried the viscount, quivering with hate; "but no, you are only trifling with me, Basquine."

"I was sure of it!" said she with a shout of derision; he will not believe me—because he is afraid."

"Afraid!" said Scipio in a choking voice. Speak, and if you say the truth——"

"Bless us!" continued she, smiling, "don't look so wofully cross. Would not any one believe, now, that I was going to propose some appalling crime? I mean nothing more than a bit of devilry; and which would be the more excusable to you that you could repeat in this case to your father, 'I have copied you again: what I have done, you did before."

He looked at her astonished.

"Yes!' she proceeded to say, "the longer I think of it, the more piquant and delightful the trick seems to me. What do I say, a trick! no, rather a lesson, and an excellent one, too. Oh! could we but return that man a hundred-fold the galling rebuke he has given you this day, would it not be delightful? Then it is, I confess, you would be a giant in boldness compared to him. We should both be revenged, and I should doat upon you."

"Basquine! you kill me with suspense."

"Come, attend to me, impatient demon. First of all you must know that, a few days since, whilst expecting your return, I happened to be in a remote district—somewhere about the barrier of hell. I was looking out for an obscure abode—a retired and lonely house. At that time I had some designs in my head concerning you."

"An obscure abode! a retired lonely house!" repeated Scipio, in spite of himself interested, "what for?"

"Oh! some very strange and fantastic ideas that you would have liked. But no matter now about that. Well, I was traversing a street called Old Market-street—do you know it?"

"Not I. But what in the world does all this preface mean?"

"Have patience," said Basquine. "In that street I found the very house I wanted—a poor, lonely, secluded house, and among several others that are untenanted. I hired the house, and after going over it, methought it must very neary resemble the den wherein your cunning father had entrapped the lovely Princess of Montbar."

She uttered the latter part of her speech very slowly, fixing a deep penetrating look on the viscount.

He was not yet on the track of Basquine's infernal design; but still he experienced a kind of indefinite anguish mixed with the keenest curiosity.

Here Basquine, rising from her chair, went and sat down by the side of Scipio on a divan, and whispered to him:

"I must not tell you the rest of my project aloud. We might be overheard. Listen to me, you young devil; put your ear closer."

Then on pretence of whispering to him, Basquine put her arm round the young man's neck, and rested her chin upon his shoulders.

When he felt the suspiration from her lips, caressing his cheek, Scipio could not help trembling with love and desire.

"So then we possess a lonely, solitary house," continued she; "now here is what I suppose. It is just half past four—you shall go to Mrs. Wilson."

"To Mrs. Wilson?" cried Scipio, stupified.

"Yes, you shall go to Mrs. Wilson."

"You forget the constables!"

"Silly boy! Don't you see my garden wall adjoing those new buildings? Leporello will hold a ladder for you, and nimble and pretty as a cherubim you shall make off whilst those gaping dummies are watching at the gate."

"Very true, but what have I to do at Mrs. Wilson's?"

"You shall go and court Raphaela if you like; until her mother returns, if she is out. But if you find her at home, you must put on a sad hypocritical face, saying to her; 'My dear and lovely mother-in-law, I am come to run away with you—yes to run away with you directly, without even waiting till you have dined; I have a coach below.' 'Where are you going to take me, my dear Scipio?' Mrs. Wilson will say. 'To do a good deed, charming mamma,' you will answer, 'to do a delicate generous action, but which nobody except yourself could do fitly; for it is to succour a woman, a poor bed-ridden creature, whom you may be a guardian angel to. The poor woman will explain the whole matter to you, for it is her own secret; so come quickly, my dear mamma, minutes are ages to those in distress. Mrs. Wilson has an excellent heart she will believe you, and you lead her away.'"

Scipio began to understand. A fierce expression of joy brightened up his face, and yet a cold shiver ran over his heart.

Basquine drew still closer to him, and proceeded:

"Mrs. Wilson, as unsuspicious as the princess was in that other case, will get into the coach with you; then you carry her off to Old Market-street—the third floor; a lonely, deserted room, which this key will unlock; and there—yes, there, no less resolute and bold than your father was when he had lured the princess to his den by means of a diabolical snare."

"Basquine!" exclaimed Scipio, appalled and giddy with affright, as he faltered between the desire and the horrors of so terrible a vengeance, "Basquine, there is hell in that thought!"

"And think you after that, in spite of his love, your father would marry Mrs. Wilson? As for us, we start to-night for the frontier, and to-morrow leave France behind; always enamoured, and rich wherever we go, thanks to my talent. What say you to such a life, my pale and handsome Don Juan?" continued Basquine, throwing her arms round Scipio's neck, and in a manner seating herself upon his knees. "Think you that man, who intended to crush you with shame, will not in turns be annihilated? And, then, what a thunderstroke it will be afterwards to hurl at his face: '*I have done what you did before me, father.*'"

* * * * *

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Ten minutes after this interview, night, so early and sudden at that season of the year, had fallen.

Basquine took her measures now with electrical speed to complete the sum of her revenge—that revenge she had so long yearned to enjoy.

Bamboche took the same road shortly after Scipio.

Basquine hurried outherself in a hackney coach, leaving behind her a letter with this addres: "*To Mr. Martin.*"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DEATH OF SCIPIO.

WHEN Martin arrived at the Hotel de Basquine, and read the letter the actress had left for him, he cried out;

"Oh! how frightful it would be." Then he ran out and hurried away.

This was what Basquine had written to him:

"Come directly to Old Market-street. Bamboche and I are waiting for you there. We shall all be revenged now. Bamboche will be revenged on Scipio, the destroyer of his daughter Bruyere; you of Count Duriveau, the destroyer of your mother; I, of Scipio and his father, an infamous race, which I, a daughter of the people, have sworn to pursue to death!"

Martin, getting into the hackney cab which had brought him there, was driven off like lightning to Old Market-street.

Meanwhile a letter had been left for Count Duriveau, at his hotel, and it ran thus:

"Go to Mrs. Wilson's, where you will be told that Scipio has just taken her out. He has basely abused her confidence, and has taken her to the house in Old Market-street, *to be revenged on you!*

"Remember the Princess of Montbar, and guess the remainder.

"Like father, like son."

A few seconds before his cab had reached the house in Old Market-street, Martin saw a woman rush out of that fearful den, and disappear through the other end of the street."

Martin leapt to the ground, found the door partly open, and pushed it so rudely, that as it rebounded with the shock, it closed again of itself.

He ran up to the third storey.

Greatly to his surprise, he did not hear the least noise as he drew near the apartment; at length he reached the lading. A faint light, escaping through the open door guided him. He crossed the front room.

Struck with horror and dismay, he was compelled to stop at the sill of the inner room, and leaned against the door-frame; he felt himself fainting, and was rooted to the spot.

And this was the ghastly spectacle he beheld:

Scipio, his hair stained with blood, running down his cheeks from a large gaping wound in the temple, lay upon a bed, unable to move, white as ashes, and dying.

Kneeling at the head of this bed, was Count Duriveau, with his hands convulsively crossed: his white waistcoat was covered with blood, and his face, dripping with cold sweat, was still more livid in its hue than his dying son's.

In the middle of the room lay a heavy wooden chair, half broken, amidst a pool of blood, and there too lay a shawl belonging to Mrs. Wilson.

Opposite the door where Martin was standing, the pale and ruthless faces of Basquine and Bamboche were looking on as silent witnesses of the deed.

Duriveau had not perceived them—his steadfast and fiery eyes, which seemed to burn through his tears, were rivetted on the eyes of his son; his mouth thrown open by a spasmodic contraction of the jaw, seemed unable to shut again: he heaved every moment a convulsive sob—the only sound that broke in upon the terrific silence of that scene.

At length Count Duriveau made a violent effort to speak, and these few broken words issued from his quivering lips:

"I have killed—my son!—I have killed my son!"

It was horrible. One would have thought the wretched man, then under the influence of delirium, was compelled to utter those fatal words, and could find no others. For a third time he repeated shaking his head the while:

"I have killed my son!—I have killed my son!"

At that moment Scipio's eyes, hitherto half-closed, opened wide, and a last glimmer of life and youth imparted to his glance more of its limpid and brilliant glow than it had ever shown before.

His lips moved faintly, without any sound, as though he would have spoken.

The count perceived it, and muttered again:

"He will tell me: thou hast killed thy son!—thou hast killed thy son!"

Scipio soon after smiled a strange sort of smile, and said in a thin, faint feeble voice, which died with his last breath:

"You have killed me—but—never mind—I have won—the game. You shan't—marry—Mrs. Wilson. Blame yourself—I but follow—your example—I have done what you did before—you know—the Princess—of Montbar. I say—who would have thought—that the *young father*—would become the *killing—father.*"

On the brink of eternity, that unhappy, that indomitable boy concluded his short life with a sarcasm.

"Scipio! my son—you must not die!" cried the count in an awful voice.

And then he threw himself over the lifeless body of his son, and covered him with frantic kisses.

Martin stood petrified with terror. Basquine and Bamboche, who had espied the companion of their early years, pointed with a gesture of pitiless triumph to the wretched father extended over the dead body of his son.

This cold ferocity exasperated Martin, and roused him from his stupor.

He crossed the chamber with rapid strides, unnoticed by the count, and seizing Basquine by the arm, cried in an under tone, fraught with anger, indignation and reproach:

"You shall not insult by your presence the grief, the remorse of a father who has killed his son. Basquine, you have converted into a homicidal weapon a secret which I had entrusted to you as sister—it was infamous!"

"Brother, I was avenging you also," replied Basquine.

"Surely, you will not be so cruel as to stand there, that this wretched father may see you—you, the cause of this horrible crime!" cried Martin in a voice so heartrending, that Basquine, already borne down by Martin's rebuke, drew back more deeply into the shade of the outer room, so that the count could not perceive her; whilst Bamboche, with his arms crossed over his huge chest, kept looking on the appalling scene with savage exultation.

Suddenly a hollow and confused murmuring was heard in the street, and directly after, several heavy blows shook the door.

"The watch! I am nabbed," cried Bamboche. "The police were on my heels—they must have tracked me to Basquine's, and then here. If they arrest me," said he, tittering, and drawing out a large clasp-knife, "they will pay dearly for it!"

"A murder!" cried Martin, running to the bandit; "*you* commit a murder?—never!"

"I have reached my second!" said Bamboche, with ferocious irony, as he disengaged himself from Martin's hold.

"So then it was true! you were rightly suspected," muttered Martin. "You have shed blood!"

"Twice—and to steal only," answered Bamboche, "so that one more at present—or two on a pinch—what matter! They will cut my neck but once.—Adieu, my friends, give me your hands, and then forward."

Basquine and Martin shrinking back with disgust, rejected the hand the murderer presented to them.

"Ah!" cried the bandit, with wild fury—you shudder at the murderer, and won't even touch his hand,—so much the better—that will give me a tiger's strength and ferocity. I shall now kill for the sake of killing."

"In the King's name! open the door, cried the watch."

In spite of the delirium into which he had sunk,

Duriveau, recalled to his senses by the increasing tumult outside, sat up, and perceiving Martin, who came out of the room where Basquine and Bamboche still concealed themselves.

"Martin," cried the count, drawing back amazed —"what you here?"

"The police are below," cried Martin; "they will be up directly."

"Ah! I have killed my son," muttered the count, "the scaffold awaits me!"

"Flight is impossible," resumed Martin in despair

"Oh! save me!" muttered the count, in the first outbreak of his terror, "save me! you too are my son! It was not to insult my despair you came hither. I have learned to appreciate you now; you are generous. If you are here, it is to rescue me, is it not? Take pity on me. Oh! the scaffold."

"The door is burst in," cried Martin; "the unhappy man is lost."

And truly, the street-door had yielded; a loud uproar and tumultuous din was heard upon the staircase, as several hurried steps came up.

"They are coming!" cried Martin, listening. "Ah! they stop on the first floor—but they will very soon be here. Oh, that I cannot save *my father* from the scaffold."

There was a something in his accent, on uttering these words so heartrending, that the count throwing himself for the first time into *his son's arms*, replied, but no longer with fear or dejection:

"Yes, I am *your father*—I tell you so over the body of that unfortunate child—and this once at any rate, you shall not blush for me."

"What would you!" cried Martin, as he saw the count go towards the door. "They are already examining the second-floor. Where are you going?"

"To give myself up—and confess my crime. The blood I have shed must be atoned for,—come, my son, lend me your arm. It is not my heart fails me now, but my strength."

Just then Bamboche, who had overheard the foregoing dialogue, came out, and said to the count with much dignity:

"Sir, it is not Count Duriveau that I am going to rescue from the scaffold, but Martin's father. I will say I killed your son."

Neither the count nor Martin would listen to the sacrifice, but Bamboche, without hearing their objections, threw himself among the police and the soldiers, and after wounding one of the officers slightly, was easily captured.

"Now," said he, let us talk a bit. "I confess the two murders I am accused of, and moreover a third."

"A third murder!" cried the magistrate, who was in company with the police.

"Yes, a stripling,—he was here with a woman. I entered the house to steal something, and surprised the lovers; they were startled, and cried out 'thieves!' So to stop their clatter, I knocked the youth down with a chair; that's all."

This account was readily believed, for who, instead of trusting to the probable confessions of a bandit, guilty of two murders already, could have dreamt of accusing as the assassin of his own son, a man of so lofty a standing as Count Duriveau, and one whose fortune was immense.

Besides, we all know that Justice has no feverish propensity to ransack the evil doings of the rich and great! And good reason there is for this levity, for if all the criminals among the higher classes were punished when they err, the race would soon disappear from the earth.

* * * *
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Bamboche's trial came on; he was declared guilty of three murders, and condemned to death.

Neither Martin nor Basquine had forgotton their pledges to their early companion.

Thus the day before that fixed for his execution, the three friends having obtained a special order for that purpose, assembled for the last time in the cell where Bamboche awaited his end.

EPILOGUE TO MARTIN THE FOUNDLING.

There remains but little to be said before we drop the curtain.

Bamboche was visited by Basquine in prison. She carried opium with her, and the two forlorn beings took each a strong dose of the soporific poison, and died taking leave of the disconsolate Martin, who in vain strove to rescue them from the efforts of their desperate deed.

The Prince of Montbar died abroad, and the too frail Regina married Captain Just, and became an honest woman once more.

After the death of Viscount Scipio, his father, Count Duriveau, withdrew to his estates in Sologne, carrying with him his surviving son Martin, whom he had recognised as his own offspring. He likewise married the laceworker, Madame Perrine. The better to show his deep remorse for his former wicked life, he took his poor tenantry under his protection; and by founding a sort of village commonwealth, to which he brought his money, and they brought their industry, he created a hive of happy labourers, whose former curses were changed into blessings.

The high-minded Claude Gerard was made the guardian of this rural republic.

THE END.

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